REPORT RESUMES

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CLASSROOM PRACTICES DEEMED EFFECTIVE BY NINETY-EIGHT PARTICIPANTS IN 1965 NDEA ENGLISH INSTITUTES.

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A TOTAL OF 206 EFFECTIVELY-USED CLASSROOM PRACTICES, CONTRIBUTED BY 98 PARTICIPANTS IN 1965 NATIONAL DEFENSE EDUCATION ACT ENGLISH INSTITUTES, ARE DESCRIBED IN THIS COLLECTION. PRACTICES ARE DIVIDED INTO THREE SECTIONS--87 IN LITERATURE, 65 IN COMPOSITION, AND 54 IN LANGUAGE. A DESCRIPTION AND DETAILS OF IMPLEMENTATION, AND SUGGESTED GRADE AND ABILITY LEVELS ARE PROVIDED FOR EACH PRACTICE. (DL)

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TE000 188

CONTENTS

Literature 1 - 53

Composition 54 - 91

Language 92 - 132

Grade: 7, Ability: low, Practice: oral book reports using overhead projector

Painless extraction of oral book reports from students of low ability is possible through utilization of the classroom overhead projector. The teacher must help the student plan his report, but the rewards to the student's ego and the effectiveness of his contribution far surpass the work involved.

On an acetate sheet, with a water-soluble marker, structure the plot line of the report to be given. Beneath the "setting" write in sequential order the essential points to be covered. Follow the same plan for "rising action", "climax", "falling action," and "conclusion". The student may use an index card to supply his need for additional pertinent information about each point. The slightly darkened room, the clarity of the procedure, and the friendly companionship of the projector effect unusual rapport between the inexperienced speaker and his peers.

Pearl Bisbee, Andrews Junior High School, Andrews, Texas

Grade: 7-9, Ability: any, Practice: a problem-solving book report

After a class has read several short stories on a common theme, demonstrate the techniques of developing a paragraph by raising a question, responding to a quotation, and defining a term. Then tell the class to consider each of the short stories a full-length book about which they will write one paragraph using a specific method of development. The question or quotation should touch on a major theme of the story; the definition may be drawn from any source. The paragraphs may be only five or six sentences long but must mention the name of the story and its author. This practice is helpful for low groups because it provides accessible, familiar material; it becomes more of a challenge for high groups to organize their materials effectively.

Eleanor Buehrig, East Junior High School, Alton, Illinois

Grade: 8-9, Ability: high, average, mixed, Practice: varying book report techniques.

To arouse interest in a variety of books, allow many forms of report and review. Encourage panel discussions, tape recordings, short original plays, talks illustrated by flannelgrams or by large painted or crayon portrayals of dramatic incidents. The group book report allows five or six pupils who have read the same book a chance to collaborate on presenting some aspect of the work in any form they chose. Allow four to six weeks for preparation and provide occasional class time for the group to confer. Dramatization of one or more scenes may be enhanced by a narrator's supplying explanatory background and hints of plot development. Keep the extent of costumes and scenery flexible. The success of any presentation depends largely on three factors: the enthusiasm of the students, the creativity of the group, and the amount of work the individual students are willing to put into the project.

Theodora M. Hallin, Woodland Junior High School, Fayettville, Arkansas

Grade: 9 , Ability: low, Practice: classroom trial of fiction characters

Having read an abridged version of David Cooperfield, the class tries Mr. Murdstone and his sister Jane Murdstone on a charge of willful and premeditated murder of Davy's mother, Mrs. Copperfield-Murdstone, by their restriction, coldness, indifference, and "firmness." The proceedings require a judge, a clerk, attorneys, witnesses, and defendants. Testimony and questions are drawn from the novel. The practice provides students with opportunities to talk before their peers, to exercise logic in framing proper, clear, or tricky questions and in planning and summarizing a coherent prosecution or defense. Interestingly enough, the decision has not always been against the Murdstones.

F. P. Armstrong, Rochelle Township High School, Rochelle, Illinois

Grade: 9, Ability: high, average, mixed, Practice: a panel discussion of non-fiction

A class session patterned on Meet the Press stimulates both research and discussion. A volunteer or a class-elected individual prepares to be the author of a non-fiction work by thoroughly familiarizing himself with the man's life, the circumstances prompting the writing, and details of the subject matter. The entire class comprises the panel, preparing a variety of provocative questions for its "guest." Questions are selected and refined to reveal a thorough knowledge of the subject by both panel member and author. Discussion may also include matters of interpretation and style as well as fact. Since this type of panel requires only an occasional guiding comment from the instructor, the teacher is free to observe and evaluate his class. Selections such as James Michener's Hawaii and Edwin Way Teale's "An Adventure in Viewpoint" have been effectively studied in this manner.

J. H. Berrier, Ottawa Township High School, Ottawa, Illinois

Grade: 7-12, Level: any, Practice: one-paragraph book reports

A one-paragraph book report written in class provides a measure both of outside reading and of ability to organize relevant information about a controlling topic or statement. Avoid blanket topics that attempt to cover all the students' reading; concentrate instead on providing a provocative topic or statement on one aspect of the book. The subject which may be announced ahead of time or may be presented in the writing period, may be responded to in terms of illustration, support or even rebuttal. Important determinants of the final grade are relevancy of material chosen and effectiveness of organization.

Seymour C. Beck, Arts High School, Newark, New Jersey

Grade: 7-12, Ability: any, Practice: character study as a book review technique.

Since most students tend initially to discuss books in terms of personal likes and dislikes, encourage students to formulate and defend their reactions to a work. Plot details may be included to justify their position, but usually in-depth character study brings out more worthwhile insights into psychology and philosophy. The study thus moves beyond mere plot-summary to a consideration of the author's purpose. Such a technique works admirably with Crime and Punishment elicits valuable comment on a book like Big Red.

Bill K. Addison, Murray High School, St. Paul, Minnesota

Grade: any (reported for grade 11), Ability: mixed, Practice: panel book reviews

To avoid the traditional book report, choose four novels and assign them to sixteen students in four panels, each panel studying one of the books. Choose the best students in the class and assign a strong student to serve as chairman of the group. Allow them three weeks to read the books and to prepare the discussions. During this time the other students are assigned a novel of their choice from a reading list for recreational reading.

Give all students duplicated copies of elements to look for in reading and discuss in class all questions concerning the material and the method of procedure. Instruct panels to discuss the author's background and style, the setting, the major character and the importance of the minor characters, the plot and conflict, the theme, and any symbolic meanings in the book. Ask the chairman to discuss the author's background and style and the setting, and to introduce the other panel members and their topics.

The entire class may spend three class periods in the library, the panels using books and periodicals to prepare the discussions and the other students reading their own selections. During this time, move from student to student doing recreational reading and quietly ask a few questions to check on their reading.

At the end of three weeks, allow each panel thirty minutes to discuss its novel. At the end of each discussion, encourage class members to ask questions concerning the book or the discussions. In this way, many worthwhile novels can be brought to the attention of the whole class.

Many novels lend themselves to this kind of discussion but four used in one study were The Bridge of San Luis Rey, Lord of the Flies, The Old Man and the Sea, and The Pearl.

Thomas P. Story, Boling High School, Boling, Texas

Grade: 7-12, Ability: any, Practice: an in-depth approach to the book review

Rather than let the students have a free choice of books, choose one book to be read by the entire class. In making the selection, take into consideration the interest of the class and the literary value of the book. Encourage the students to buy their own paperback copies of the book. If the local bookstore orders in quantity, they can sell them to the students at a discount. Those who do not wish to buy the book can either borrow a copy or charge one from the library.

After giving the students adequate time to read the book, begin the unit by giving them an objective test on the novel: The test is given before discussing it for two reasons: (1) to be sure that everyone has read the book before the discussion (2) to test the student's comprehension on work they do on their own. The test is limited to questions on the basic plot structure, not such things as the author's style.

Following the test, spend several days discussing the piece. In some cases use lectures to present materials that the students could not be expected to get themselves. The basic purpose is to avoid the general plot and help the students achieve a deeper understanding of the book. On the last day of the unit have the students write a theme based on the novel or play.

Among the books and plays that may be used in this manner are The Scarlet Letter, The Bridge of San Luis Rey, To Kill a Mockingbird, The Crucible, To Catch an Angel, Hiroshima, Return of the Native, Pride and Prejudice, Darkness at Noon, Pygmalion, and Lord of the Flies.

Robert E. Kauffman, Warwick High School, Lititz, Pennsylvania

Grade: 12, Ability: low, Practice: a class study of children's literature

A study of children's literature is meaningful both as preparation for future parental responsibilities and as an index of a group's own childhood experiences with books. Begin the unit with a survey such as that published in This Week, a magazine supplement of many newspapers. Ask opinions on the kinds of books children should have read to them, the frequency of readings, the length of time readings should continue. The survey prompts a comparison of opinions on worthwhile children's literature, which in effect, becomes a discussion of books students used in their own childhood.

Ask a children's librarian to display and lecture on some recent books for young people, including controversial selections such as The Dead Bird, whose purpose is to acquaint children with death. Next, set up criteria for evaluating children's literature and begin bringing into class materials up to a junior high level to compare stories from the standpoint of vocaulary level, interest level, art work, and so on. Students can read juvenile prose and poetry without embarrassment for they are considering it in a larger context. In addition to building the reading habit, they are developing new tastes and sensitivity to other levels of reading.

Jacqueline R. Bonner South Eugene High School Eugene, Oregon

Grade: any, Ability: low Practice: student-created bulletin boards

For low ability classes, use the bulletin board to get students involved in what goes on in the class and in the classroom. These suggestions apply primarily to reading and writing. Quite early in the semester "preview" the literature book, noting the subject matter and setting of various selections; also consider holidays and special occasions in the school that will be coming up in the next few months. The select committees on a volunteer basis (response develops as the first one or two committees complete bulletin boards) to plan, obtain materials, and put up bulletin boards having to do with literary selections, holidays, and special events. The teacher furnishes construction paper, thumbtacks, letter patterns, basic supplies and helps a little, if asked, especially early in the year. When students start reading, have them make book jackets with suitable blurbs about the books or stories they have read; the blurb on the jacket is designed to interest other readers in the book. These jackets may or may not carry some sort of design, depending on the student. Once they get started, students often make second jackets much superior to their first. The teacher makes a jacket, not too superior, to begin with. Jackets are displayed on the bulletin board.

Students select stories, make headlines and write short articles in journalistic style to interest others in reading what they have read. These are posted on the bulletin board. As a grammar aid, assign each student an adjective or action verb (e.g., luscious, magnificent, harsh, amble, investigate, ignore); he must find and mount on a piece of paper a picture illustrating his word. These visual vocabularies can also be posted. Students find pictures in magazines, cut them out, mount them and make balloon captions for them. This really gets them to use their imagination and constructively channels the desire to draw mustaches and write balloon dialogue on the pictures in their textbooks. Results are humerous and enjoyed by all. Again, teacher may give an example to begin with. Simple business and social letters as well as student paragraphs and essays should also be displayed. The main idea is to change the bulletin board frequently, always using the students and their contributions.

Louise W. Wyman   Cadillac High School   Cadillac, Michigan

Grade: 10 Ability: any Practice: a quantitive book analysis

Because students often feel safer with numbers than with words, use an intensive book analysis that relies on number ratings as well as verbal discussion. Before the analysis is assigned, teach basic elements of plot, characterization, setting, style and theme through short stories and essays. Use the suggested analysis in class once with a common novel. After that, require that at least two books be read independently and so analyzed. Extra credit provisions include drawings or magazine illustrations portraying main characters, settings or costume. The analysis itself may be evaluated as 80% of grade dependent on depth of thought, 20% on skill and care of presentation. The basis of analysis is as follows:

RATING SYSTEM TO BE USED

1-Great   2-Good   3-Fair   4-Poor

I. MAIN PLOT: The central conflict and the action that results from it.

1. The suspense, caused by a single conflict, is built up gradually and sustained throughout most of the book, its solution coming only in the last one-quarter of the book.
2. The suspense, caused by a single conflict, is built up gradually, but the conflict is solved before three-fourths of the book is over.
3. The conflicts are episodic. They are solved shortly after each is introduced.
4. There is little suspense because there is hardly any sharply defined conflict.

II. CHARACTERIZATION: (Consider only the two, three or four main characters)

1. The main characters are fully developed, with good and bad qualities. They change as a result of the conflicts in which they are involved.
2. The main characters are fully developed, but they do not change as a result of the conflicts in which they are involved.
3. The main characters are not fully developed. They are one-sided, either all good or all bad throughout most of the book. But they do, toward the end, seem to change because of the conflicts in which they are involved.
4. The main characters are not developed, and they do not change as a result of the conflicts in which they are involved.

III. SETTING: (Physical, social and historical environment)

1. The settings play a part in the conflict (either causing it or intensifying it), and help to show what kind of people the characters are.
2. The settings cause the conflict, but are not used to advantage in pointing out the personalities of the characters.
3. The settings are suitable to the type of characters portrayed, but have nothing to do with the conflict.
4. The settings are just there. They have nothing to do with conflict nor characterization.

IV. STYLE: Includes organization of the story, sentence structure, diction.

1. The author almost always chooses the right words to give the feeling of character and action. He is easily understood. His diction is appropriate to the characters, action and environment.
2. The author's diction is appropriate to the characters, action and environment. Much of the time his meaning is clear, but there are many passages which are dull and/or hard to understand.
3. The author's diction is not always appropriate to the characters, action and environment. There are a great many passages which are dull, unnecessary and/or hard to understand.
4. The author's diction is unsuitable to his characters and environment. Almost the whole book is dull and/or difficult to understand.

FORM TO BE USED IN BOOK ANALYSIS

(Note: This form for writing up the analysis must be followed exactly.)

I. Setting

A. Copy the number and sentence from the rating chart that you feel most nearly applies to this book.

B. Write a one-sentence summary for each of the following, identifying each:
   1. Physical environment
   2. Historical environment
   3. Social environment

C. Write a paragraph (being sure to have an appropriate opening and closing sentence, as you should have for all paragraphs), explaining why you rated the element of setting as you did. Use specific examples from the story to fortify your argument.

II. Characterization

A. Copy the number and sentence from the rating chart that you feel most nearly applies to this book.

B. Name and identify the role played by the two, three, or four main characters (depending on your book). In one sentence describe each, being sure that your description includes those characteristics which makes each a unique human being.

C. Explain your rating in a well developed paragraph (opening and closing sentences), using specific examples to justify your rating.

III. Style

A. Copy the number and sentence from the rating chart that you feel most nearly applies to this book.

B. Explain this rating in a well-developed paragraph, with opening and closing sentences and specific examples from the book. You may have to use quotes sometimes for this element.

C. Quote three sentences, giving the page number before each, which you feel are especially well written because of their meaning and/or pictures which they convey.

IV. Plot

A. Copy the number and sentence from the rating chart that you feel most nearly applies to this book.

B. Give a one or two sentence summary of the major action of the book.

C. Write a paragraph, with opening and closing sentences, as well as specific back-up examples, explaining the rating you gave the plot.

V. Universal Ideas: Write three universal ideas which you have found in this book. Give page number references for each one.

VI. Average your four ratings for an overall rating of the book. Explain in a well developed paragraph why or why not you agree with the average rating. If you do not agree, what number rating do you feel the book should receive?

Jone Starr, St. Francis High School, Little Falls, Minnesota

Grade: 7-12, Ability: mixed, Practice: Book Report (CEEB essay). One period a week reading library books

If each class has one period a week as free reading time, the teacher gains the opportunity to know what the student is reading and can help him broaden his understanding and possibly advance to a higher level of reading. As a written "report" they are to answer an essay question similar to the following which is taken from page 33 of End-of-Year Examination in English for Collegebound Students, grades 9-12, a project-report by the Commission on English, College Entrance Examination Board.

> "I believe in aristocracy...not an aristocracy of power, based upon rank and influence, but an aristocracy of the sensitive, the considerate and the plucky." (NOTE: plucky means brave)
>
> DIRECTIONS:
> From your reading select a character who in some ways seems fitted for membership in this kind of aristocracy. In a carefully planned composition show the extent to which this description does or does not apply to the character you have chosen. Be certain to identify the character, the work, and the author.

This question is given as a composition assignment to be answered in class and should be adjusted to the level of the students.

The students seem to have a more positive approach to such "book reports," and many confess they read a book a week whereas in past years they read only the required number of four or six. In an hour's time they get far enough into the book to become interested; and since Friday is our reading day, students often take the books home over the week-end. Those who have been reading below their level are stimulated by the discussion of other class members and find thick books are not necessarily dull books. A book list of recommended readings appears helpful, particularly with the college-bound. Although it is tempting to use this hour for other tasks, the teacher should use the time as a reading period too.

Lois Wilkerson, Amber-Pocasset Junior-Senior High School,
Amber, Oklahoma

Grade: 7, 8, Ability: high, Practice: oral book reviews

During the first semester, use oral book reviews in order to give opportunity for pupils to develop the functional variety of speech suitable for reports. Karlin's Teaching Reading in the High School, for instance, provides ideas for creating and preserving interest in oral reviews. During the report, the teacher notes comments on a slip of paper which is then handed to the pupil. The teacher also notes items of incorrect usage on a master list to be used in a usage program.

Laura Singer, E. O. Smith High School, Storrs, Connecticut

Grade: 9, Ability: low, Practice: directing the slow learner

When teaching students achieving three to six grades below normal, a teacher must begin working at the actual level of the class. Slow learners' strength seems to lie in a certain commitment to routine; their weakness is a brief attention span. One helpful text is Elfert and Weinstein's Achieving Reading Skills, New York: Globe Book Company, 1958. These readings are selected from Dickens, London, Stevenson, and so on. Students can be guided to read aloud, think out simple problems, and write brief responses to questions on the reading. Placing these questions on the board and hearing students read them aloud first eliminates some comprehension errors. If the responses are not too involved, they may be checked immediately in class. The students work best on short assignments which introduce new vocabulary slowly. These selections are controlled in difficulty and have the virtue of familiarizing students with a few outstanding authors.

Charles G. Ballard, Chilocco Indian School, Chilocco, Oklahoma

Grade: 12, Ability: high, average, Practice: the 65-word book report

When deluged by the number of compositions to be corrected, abandon the usual essay book report. Instead, pass out scratch paper and dittoed final sheets and tell students they have only sixty-five words in which to communicate the controlling idea, theme or plot of the book that they have read, stapling work sheets to final copy. The results are astonishing: after the initial shock, students begin using healthy techniques for concise writing that composition lessons, exercises in subordination and verb formulae and required rough drafts do not supply. One hundred points rest on using only sixty-five words.

The sixty-five word book report may become an annual event, not accompanied by advance advertising.

Sara Hess, Santiago High School, Garden Grove, California

Grade: 9-12, Ability: any, Practice: an individual start for independent reading

Here is a new outside reading program which has proved invaluable for stimulating leisure reading. At the beginning of the year, give students a reading inventory to fill out. 1) What summer reading have you done, if any? 2) What newspapers and magazines do you regularly read? What parts of these do you read? 3) Do you like to read? Why or why not? 4) Do you have any difficulty with reading? 5) What kinds of books do you like most? Least?

On the basis of this survey, personally assign a book to each child, keeping in mind his likes, dislikes and reading difficulties. Of invaluable help is *Reading Ladders for Human Relations*, Muriel Crosby, editor which is published by the American Council on Education. This book organizes reading lists into both ability and interest groupings so it is quite easy to deal with each student on an individual basis.

From time to time take five or ten minutes at the end of a period and walk around the room, casually talking to students about the books they are reading. If a student is really enjoying a book, suggest that he tell a friend about it. If a student dislikes a book, try to find out why. If you start out the year by having a student read a really exciting or enjoyable book, he'll read books willingly and accept your advice eagerly.

Have students keep whatever kind of record they want after reading a book. You may ask that they cite the name, author, date finished, and some kind of opinion. An occasional check of book cards or lists will quickly tell you if the student is reading more or less than normal, if he is reading more difficult material than before, or if his selections tend to be overly narrow.

Other inducements to independent reading include a changing display on the teacher's desk of her current reading, encouraging students to carry reading books during the school day, and use of a paperback book service such as Scholastic Book Services, Englewood Cliffs, New Jersey.

Linda DeSalvo, Wood-Ridge High School, Wood-Ridge, New Jersey

Grades: 10-12, Ability: any, Practice: developing reading habits

The reluctant reader can often be encouraged by direct teacher help with book selection. Several steps are necessary: challenge students with the fact that books are written on all subjects, at all levels, appealing to all tastes. Invite the student in for a chat to discover basic interests. On the basis of the conference, find several appropriate books in the library *with* the student. Give him time to browse through them and explain that beginning chapters are often expository, so he must "give the book a chance." The school librarian and N.C.T.E. reading materials facilitate such direct guidance.

Courtney Tommeraasen, Slayton High School, Slayton, Minnesota

Grades: 8, 9, Ability: high, average, Practice: creating short plays

Provide students with practical experience in dramatic writing by letting them collaborate on short original plays. Divide the class into four or five groups and assign the writing of conversation based on a familiar situation such as buying a pair of shoes, arguing over what television show to watch, or a similar incident. These "closet dramas" may be recorded for analysis in subsequent class periods, providing an opportunity for self-criticism of both writing and reading techniques. Combining the skills of criticism, writing, and oral interpretation, the practice provides valuable insight into the problems of the playwright as well as increasing students' awareness of stilted or artificial dialogue.

Todd Hampton, Royster Jr. High School, Chanute, Kansas

Grade: 8, 9, Ability: high, Practice: converting literature selections into student plays

In getting students involved with a literary selection, it is often helpful to culminate a literature unit by breaking the class into groups and having each group convert a literature selection into a play to be presented to the rest of the students. The following directions written on the board help guide student work:

1. Break your story into major scenes (incidents or plot steps of your story)
2. Ask yourself what necessary information is given in each scene to help the audience understand the story. Answer the following questions:
   a. Is the scene absolutely necessary to move the story to its climax or to reveal character?
   b. Can the information be communicated to the audience through dialogue in another scene?

If you answer yes to the last question, eliminate the scene and communicate the information through dialogue.

Stanley I. Koki, District Office, Honolulu, Hawaii

Grade: 7-12 Ability: any Practice: providing extra library materials

Establish in the school library a continuing supply of supplementary and reference materials related to the work of each class. The school librarian can often be called on to supply relevant materials new to the teacher as well as the students. Although no specific assignments are given in these works, the teacher may check orally on the extent of their use. Students comments on background reading and related exhibits improve the quality of class discussion and encourage study beyond the regular texts.

Douglas W. Houck Williamsville Senior High School Williamsville, New York

Grade: 11-12 Ability: any Practice: survey student's reading tastes

If literature is approached as a source of continuing delight and enlightenment, the choice of material cannot come only from the teacher. In the hope that students will develop mature reading tastes, make a written survey early in the year of reading background, tastes, and preferences. If possible, base the first major reading assignment on the findings of the survey. Draw illustrative material from books many students have read, as a slow class appreciates the force of sensory language when it is presented in a mimeographed selection from one of their favorites, From Russia with Love.

A class may also compose paragraphs in imitation of a passage from a favorite work. The usual finding from a survey of reading background is that students respond best to contemporary works on issues and experiences relevant to them. The problem of the American negro, for instance, is suggested by books such as Black Like Me, To Kill a Mockingbird, Lilies of the Field.

Angela Adamides Cranford High School Cranford, New Jersey

Grade: 10 Ability: low, Practice: independent reading in class time

Since reluctant readers react negatively to books bearing the school library stamp, conduct a paperback book drive and keep the screened results in the classroom where they are accessible. The heavy use of such a collection often spurs school purchase of requested titles, as well.

To encourage slower students in independent reading, schedule silent reading for the first 20 to 25 minutes of class time, either for several successive days or at weekly intervals. The student selects his own book as soon as he comes into class and begins reading. For students who need prodding, it helps to have pre-selected titles of high interest. Book jackets and cards may be provided by the library. Cards may remain in the jacket for identification, but can be removed for overnight reading, should the student desire to take the book home.

Schedule written book reports, oral book reports, and class discussions infrequently to promote continued interest in reading. Help readers with difficulties. Assign written progress reports to keep the student and teacher aware of the reading progress made by each student.

This silent reading achieves several goals. The students settle down to work quickly, increase their interest in reading, receive help with their problems, almost eliminate disciplinary problems, change student attitude toward English, and generally improve class behavior to a surprising degree.

Walter G. Hodges, Camelback High School, Phoenix, Arizona

Grades: 10-12, Ability: any, Practice: enlarging a classroom library

Students bring in lists of paperbacks they have at home that they would be willing to loan for the year for a classroom library. The teacher checks those titles appropriate for classroom use. When the books are brought in, a class-elected librarian makes up a 4 x 6 card carrying author's name, owner's name, and book title. Two boxes serve as In and Out files and provide the teacher with a quick check on reading activity. At the end of the year, owners are free to take their books home although many donate them to the class. This practice expands school library offerings as well as making books readily available.

Roy Honeywell North Syracuse Central High School North Syracuse, New York

Grade: 12 Ability: average Practice: using paperbacks in independent reading

As one answer to unsatisfactory reviews of hastily chosen material, have students buy paperbacks from a selection of books rated for high readability: Act One, Hiroshima, A Single Pebble, How Green Was My Valley, Cry Wolf are a few examples. Use books of contemporary interest and proven appeal to high school readers.

Include such reading as an integral part of both American, English, and world literature courses by scheduling discussion periods and tests (two-thirds objective, one-third essay). The calibre of independent reading can be raised by this exposure to inexpensive, attractive materials.

Florence Brinton, Sentinel High School, Missoula, Montana

Grade: 9-12, Ability: high, Practice: weekly reading for pleasure

Bright students often complain, and with good reason I think, that their heavy school loads make impossible any reading for pure pleasure. A solution they not only enjoy but also profit from is to set aside one day each week for a "Reading for Pleasure" day, in which the students can read anything they want as long as it is not required in any of their classes. Have no book reports, other than some occasional spontaneous ones. In short, it's as though they were at home reading.

Do ask students to record on a large permanent chart on the bulletin board what book they are currently reading. If they complete the book, they are to place an "X" after the title and author. If they think the book is especially suitable for others in the class, for whatever reasons, they place an "XX" after the title. This method enables other students to find out what their friends are reading and, in the cases of "XX", to learn of some possible books for themselves. In one class the average number of books read was fourteen. While these included a number of the Ian Fleming books, they also included works by Hemingway, Faulkner, Steinbeck, Eugene O'Neill, Ayn Rand, Will Durant, and even Plato and Adam Smith. Interestingly, more Steinbeck books were read than those of any other one author.

If the reading day is Friday, it is gratifying to find that many of the books begun are finished over the weekend. Use the time to talk to students individually, usually about their reading. You gain much more individual contact with students than before.

Theodore W. Hipple, Homewood-Flossmoor High School, Flossmoor, Illinois

Grades: 10-12, Ability: mixed, Practice: identifying dramatic devices

The study of a play can be implemented by focussing on the dramatist's use of a particular technique: as Thornton Wilder's use of one important detail, Jane Crofut's letter, to lead eventually to discovery of theme. If objects that contribute to the theme are mentioned several times, students can make a catalogue of these items showing page references, the character involved, and the significance of the item to the play. Class discussion should lead the students to draw final conclusions about the contribution such devices make to the total dramatic meaning.

Lucy R. Watson, Park Avenue High School, Franklin, Louisiana

Grade: 12, Ability: any, Practice: introduction to drama through dramatic readings

Since some students have an ingrained resistance to any form of literature beside the novel and the short story, readiness for drama can be heightened by using simple theatre techniques of a reading. Easily portable lecterns (music stands are excellent) free hands for gestures and can be quickly re-arranged for scene changes. Properties can be completely eliminated or held to a suggestion of scene and costume. While such readings take little more time or planning than conventional oral reading, the audience visualizes an element of true theater and is flattered by the assumption that their imagination can close the gap.

Sara Hess, Santiago High School, Garden Grove, California

Grade: 11, Ability: mixed, Practice: beginning drama study

An effective beginning for a study of drama is to consider several one-act plays, such as William Saroyan's "The Oyster and the Pearl" or Eugene O'Neill's "Ile." In the framework of these short works, introduce basic concepts such as conflict, characterization through dialogue, plot structure, theme, and the importance of setting and casting. In considering longer plays, be flexible in the use of a variety of supplementary materials and activities. A class may be divided into two panels to present a symposium on two plays such as Raisin in the Sun and The Dark at the Top of the Stairs. Assign the reading of the play to the whole class with appropriate guide sheets and approve the panel's format in advance so that the most important points are adequately covered. A film such as that on Our Town narrated by Clifton Fadiman reinforces class learnings and introduces new ideas such as theme variations and scenic innovations. Student skits, written analyses of television dramas, and oral presentation of reviews are also profitable. After a student's oral presentation, give him a written analysis of his work.

Angela Adamides, Cranford High School, Cranford, New Jersey

Grade: 12, Ability: average, Practice: a thematic approach to drama

Before studying more remote forms of theater, like the theater of the absurd or, at the other extreme, the tradition of Shakespeare, Moliere, Ibsen, and so on, deal first with relatively morden, "straight" drama. One such unit encompasses Look Homeward, Angel, Death of a Salesman, and The Skin of Our Teeth. Not only do these three plays progress from a generally familiar theatrical approach to a far more experimental structure and form, but they relate to each other in at least two important ways. They were all written by Americans and they all carry a strong theme in common: the function of family life in America. In the first two plays, the family seems to play a stifling role in the lives of the individuals, whereas in Wilder's play, the family functions as the only hope for society in the course of human events.

Begin each play by setting the stage on the blackboard. Follow the playwright's descriptions and attempt to illustrate the various settings so that the class has some general image of how the play looks when it is played. Then, begin an in-class reading, attempting to establish certain character traits as one goes along. Do this for two days, with the assignment that the play must be read in its entirety by the third day of study. Discussion of the whole play usually takes no more than two days.

Follow this procedure with all three plays. In the meantime, tell the students to consider a particular scene that seems especially significant which they will enact before the class. The study completed, break up in groups to prepare the scenes the students have selected. Allow two days for preparation and rehearsal. Move around among the groups, offering suggestions in directing, acting techniques, and so on. The groups usually function like this: one student introduces the scene, fitting it into the context of the play and explaining both the choice and text of the play and explaining both the choice and the way this scene illustrates a major theme in the play. He also introduces the cast. Then, two or three students present the scene. They have memorized their parts, and one member of the group has directed them, with particular emphasis on characterization and motivated stage movement. Finally, one student serves as an evaluator. He conducts a critical discussion of the scene after it is completed. Enter into this discussion and prepare evaluation cards with comments and grades which are given each student in the group on the following day. Usually students can present two scenes a day.

At times invite other English classes to witness the selections and occasionally present an "Evening of Drama" in which sufficient scenes to include everyone in the class are presented for parents and friends.

Mrs. Lenore Mussoff, Allderdice High School, Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania

Grade: 10, Ability: low, Practice: oral reading of television plays

Students of low ability frequently wish they could become someone else--they don't seem to worry about shouldering someone else's problems, but they like to get rid of their own. There seems to be a way to partially allow them to do so.

There are several paperbacks on the market containing good television plays, which generally do not contain objectionable material, and which provide various roles. These roles may be assigned in class, for oral reading. Urge students to read with sincerity and enthusiasm, and they usually will to the best of their ability. Discussions of character behavior frequently follow, often expanding to real life problems. Students interest is maintained by devoting a maximum of thirty minutes a period to this activity.

It is preferable to allow a student to keep his role throughout the reading of the play to heighten the meaning of his reading for the rest of the class. His status as well as his own identification with the character is improved thereby.

Walter G. Hodges, Camelback High School, Phoenix, Arizona

Grade: 11, Ability: any, Practice: staging dramatic episodes

As an aid to visualizing reading and increasing appreciation of character complexity, ask students to prepare a director's copy of key scenes from a play or novel. Individual imagination should be able to create wholly different mechanical effects while retaining the author's original intention. For instance, have students prepare director's copies of *Macbeth*: Act I, Scenes 3 and 7; Act II, Scene 2; Act III, Scene 4; Act IV, Scenes 1 and 3; Act V, Scenes 1 and 8. The instructions for preparing these scenes are as follows:

1. The settings and costumes may be either authentic Elizabethan or current American. Whichever is chosen must be followed throughout the director's copy.
2. At the beginning of each scene, every item in the setting should be detailed along with its placement on the stage.

3. The general color of lighting should be stated at the beginning of a scene. If there is to be a change of lighting within the scene, this should be noted at the appropriate place in the script.
4. A character's costume should be described in detail at the time the character enters the scene.
5. The speaking character's movements, gestures and facial expressions should be given during every speech. When a character is on stage, but someone else is speaking, the non-speaking character's movements and any significant gestures should be noted.
6. Drawings of all or selected settings may be submitted, as well as drawings of costumes for various scenes.

Allow the students about two weeks to prepare this assignment. On the day they are to be handed in, have different students read their interpretations of different scenes. The other students are encouraged to interrupt when they have interpreted a setting or a character differently. This generally results in a lively questioning and defense of varying treatments.

Jone M. Starr, St. Francis High School, Little Falls, Minnesota

Grades: 10-12, Ability: mixed, Practice: drama criticism

One can build a respect for the tools of literary criticism by employing a variety of critical techniques. For instance, after class study of Macbeth has progressed through the reading of several scenes and listening to recordings of the Old Vic company, questions such as the following can be mimeographed with ample space for notes on class discussion.

1. What is the purpose of Act I, scene i?
2. How is this purpose accomplished?
3. Discuss the hidden meaning in the line: "Fair is foul, and foul is fair."
4. What figures of speech are employed in lines 7-9, Act I, scene ii?
5. Who is the "slave" in line 20, Act I, scene ii?

Weekly tests may be given based on questions in such a study guide.

Jane Coggin, Bridgeport High School, Bridgeport, Texas

Grade: 12, Ability: low, Practice: an oral test of drama comprehension

A challenging oral test of comprehension and expression can be provided by giving students a mimeographed list of 20 to 25 questions based on events in an assigned play. Jumble the order of the questions but consider them in the order of plot development when analyzed in class. After students have read the play, the questions are distributed and answers are located independently. When called on in class, students receive credit for accuracy of the passage, oral reading skill and interpretation. A suggested rating scale is 50% for locating the pertinent passage, 20% for oral expression and 30% for oral reading ability (considering work recognition, pronunciation, enunciation, and phrasing). This activity touches off lively discussion of plot and a more thoughtful interpretation of character.

Anita Bowers, Manzano High School, Albuquerque, New Mexico

Grade: 11, 12, Ability: average, Practice: drama and contemporary events

On or close to the anniversary of President Kennedy's assassination, use a special lesson that has proved very effective. Begin by playing the "Overture" to Camelot as the pupils come into the room. By the time the music has ended, the pupils are all in their seats and are generally attentive and curious.

Tell them that the ultimate object of the lesson will be clear by the end of the period, but for now simply relax and listen. Then begin to give them a brief background on the show. In addition to the information that is on the album jacket, give them such information as the fact that this was Lerner and Loewe's first show since My Fair Lady and that the advance ticket sale was so great that the show was a financial success even before it opened.

Next, systematically explain the plot of the show, stopping from time to time to play songs from the recording. Since one fifty-minute period does not allow time for both a recap of the show and the playing of the entire album, it is advantageous to have a select number of the show's songs pretaped. This also facilitates the starting and stopping of the music without having to fumble with the arm of a record player.

It is also advantageous to have the words of some of the songs placed on an overhead projector transparency. This makes it easier for the pupils to follow the words of the music.

Read the last scene in its entirety from the acting script before playing the reprise of "Camelot." Make certain that the pupils understand the significance of this scene. The world of King Arthur has collapsed. Then suddenly he realizes that his never-never kingdom will continue to exist in the minds of those who will always remember its existence.

Without comment, turn to the issue of Life, Vol. 55, No. 23 and read "An Epilogue" by Theodore H. White, December 6, 1963, pp 158-159. In this article, which is an interview with Mrs. Kennedy following the assassination, the former First Lady relates how the President liked to listen to

Camelot before retiring at night. She says that his favorite selection was the final reprise of the song "Camelot." She then infers a relationship between the shattered world of King Arthur and that of the fallen President. The whole thing is done simply and beautifully. Try to time the reading so that it is concluded just about the time that the period is over.

Robert E. Kauffman, Warwick High School, Lititz, Pennsylvania

Grade: 8, Ability: low, Practice: role-playing for language development

For students whose language deficiencies trace back to oral shortcomings, role playing offers opportunity for guided, structured oral experience in the classroom. Two major sources for the dramatic situations seem most fruitful. Situations are drawn from the young person's social milieu, emphasizing problems of manners and protocol, interpersonal relationships, or vocational and social contact. Also situations are drawn successfully from literature, providing a way for the slow learner to respond to a literary reading without having to struggle with the written language.

Roles are assigned in the situations according to student need or student wishes. It is important to get the students to project themselves into the role, so they feel that they are the character and can talk through the part extemporaneously. The playing of the situation is done in the front of the room without props. Encouragement of the participants is sometimes needed, but criticism is best withheld during the dramatization. Class discussion after the playing is profitable and will frequently result in noticeably improved interpretations on a replaying.

An important part of the evaluation relates to the use of language--to whether the language the players used communicated adequately and whether it was appropriate to the situation. The fact that the students are for the moment someone else makes it possible for them to be more objective about the language they used. A sample playing might be handled as follows:

Set the situation	Read Thurber's "Snapshot of a Dog." Stop at point where Rex fights the dog on the car tracks. Set a scene where the boys bring Rex home.
Assign the characters	Select players for the roles of the two boys, Mother, Father.
Play the scene	Have the players work through their roles in bringing home the wet and mangled dog.
Review the scene	Discuss with class whether players interpreted roles reasonably or accurately. Elicit suggestions, other interpretations.

Replay the scene	Use the same players or different ones to reinterpret the situation in light of the discussion.

Kent Gill   Davis Junior High School   Davis, California

Grade: 7-12 Ability: any Practice: student teaching of literature

Students are capable of taking a whole literature unit, dividing themselves into four or five groups, and assuming individual as well as group responsibilities. One must spend some time, at the beginning of the unit, discussing the make-up of such a group, pointing out responsibilities of chairmen and recorder and individual members. Develop subject areas which may be used for individual oral and written reports. These reports are assembled and appear as part of the penel's booklet. Encourage students to use teaching aids, i.e., charts, slides, movies, phonographs, etc. Also encourage them to relate their material to one of the other art forms; thus, they may bring in prints of famous paintings or music representative of a period, country, or style. Relevant history, geography, culture, are also brought in as much as possible. The panel also develops test questions over their material, and after all panels have had the opportunity of presenting their material, a review is held and then their test is given. If there are four groups, each group hands in 25 objective questions and one essay question. Panels correct their own sections of the test and go over the answers with the rest of the class. Students may work with a textbook or with short, story and poetry units, or with four or five novels. With proper guidance, these self-taught units seem to encourage a high level of student creativity and maturity.

William Hartman   Bentley High School   Livenia, Michigan

Grade: any Ability: any Practice: student panels for review

End-of-term reviews are useful, not only to remind students of easily forgotten details, but also to give them a better understanding of the relationship of the parts to the whole; however, sometimes such reviews can be a waste of time for better students and can go unnoticed by poor students. Try the following device for reviews, particularly at the end of a study of literature. Just before the review is to take place, read and discuss the chapter in the language book on kinds of group discussions and responsibilities of chairmen, members of a group, and the audience. Then divide the material to be reviewed into sections and the students into group. Select chairmen carefully, then assign a section of literature to each group. Different groups demonstrate different kinds of group discussion: panel, with audience participation; panel, without audience participation; and symposium. It is the chairman's responsibility to see that important points are covered within the time limits set.

Jane West   Safford High School   Safford, Arizona

Grade: 9, Ability: high, Practice: appreciating point of view

The following assignment is helpful in having the students write an effective character sketch and to see how point of view operates in fiction. After reading "Mr. Reginald Peacock's Day" by Katherine Mansfield, have them write a brief sketch similar to the manner in which Katherine Mansfield characterizes Reginald Peacock in the story. In the sketch have Mrs. Peacock discuss her husband and give her reactions to what he does or says in the story. Students were encouraged to try to suggest her character in the paper and see the domestic issues presented in the story from her point of view.

Stanley I. Koki, District Office, Honolulu, Hawaii

Grade: 9, Ability: high, Practice: building listening skills

Among the important skills which students need to develop are the ability to appreciate what another person is reading aloud, the ability to listen for a specific purpose, and the ability to adjust one's reading to a particular selection or purpose. In teaching the short story "Catherine and the Winter Wheat" by P. B. Hughes, the following activity is helpful in having students practice these skills:

> The story concerns two crises which face the members of a Canadian farm family as they drive into town with their winter wheat crop. Catherine, the 16 year-old daughter, conceals a letter in which she plots an elopement. When she witnesses her father's losing the sale of the wheat because he had insisted on having the wheat tested by the miller, inspite of the fact that the miller had already offered to buy the wheat, she chooses an honorable course of action by tearing up the letter. Since the story with a double plot line makes its point very subtly, the students would

need to read it very carefully to discover the connection between the two plot lines. Therefore read the story orally after asking them to listen to see whether they can establish the link between the two plot lines. After reading the story, ask the students if they have any questions. Two basic questions are usually raised, and these are written on the board:

1. Why does Catherine tear up the letter?

2. What is the significance of the father's decision to test the wheat?

To answer these two questions correctly, of course, would be to understand the central significance of the story. Students are asked to reread the story silently to answer the two questions either orally or in writing.

Stanley I. Koki, District Office, Honolulu, Hawaii

Grade: 9, Ability: high, average, Practice: visualizing setting through student drawings

Recognizing that the ability to visualize setting is crucial to much enjoyment of literature, have students draw a setting if it figures importantly in a selection. Carl Stephenson, for instance, has provided many scene details in his "Leiningin versus the Ants." Assign a drawing of the setting based on writer-supplied details. After students submit their work, convert one, or several, of them into a transparency for viewing with the overhead projector. Then ask the class to evaluate the accuracy and adequacy of these drawings. Such analysis encourages repeated reference to the story for significant details and results in closer reading for spatial relationships.

Stanley I. Koki, District Office, Honolulu, Hawaii

Grade: 9, Ability: high, Practice: challenging reader response to significant detail

The ability to respond to important clues is an important skill in understanding and appreciating literature. In teaching the short story "Footfalls," by Wilbur Daniel Steele, have the students reconstruct the murder exactly as they think it happened, using as many clues given in the story as possible. After collecting student papers, four interpretations are written on the board:

A. Manuel heard Wood drop the money bag and attempted to steal the money from Wood. Instead, Wood kills Manuel and flees after setting fire to the house.
B. Wood kills Manuel because he has found out about the money; Wood wants to keep his theft a secret and is afraid Manuel will turn him in.
C. Accustomed to being given things by his father, Manuel becomes inordinately eager for wealth. He therefore attempted to rob Wood of his money.
D. One night Mr. Wood and Manuel get into a fight; during the fight a fire is started and Manuel dies in the flames.

Ask the class to indicate which interpretation best summarizes the crime as it apparently occurred. This prompts spirited discussion, with the class having to refer to the story for significant details that have been overlooked or misinterpreted. After the class has identified all the details in the story necessary to recreate the crime, reword the most nearly accurate interpretation.

The discussion resulting from this activity brings out the following points which enable students to appreciate the literary merits of the story:

1. Boaz' "blindness" toward his son; the idea of blindness is carried out in the murder itself; the reader hears it rather than sees it.

2. The burned building left standing after the house burns down symbolizes Boaz' spiritual death; the "green shoot pressing out from the dead earth" symbolizes his spiritual rebirth at the end of the story after the murderer is brought to justice.

3. Wood's growing a beard to change his identity is ironical, since Boaz cannot see anyway.

Stanley I. Koki, District Office, Honolulu, Hawaii

Grade: 7-12, Ability: any, Practice: panel quiz for narrative detail

Stimulate awareness of the importance of minute detail in a short story by using a panel quiz. Assign a short story and have each student create ten short-answer questions about it. On the next day, select four panelists. Class members direct questions to a specific panelist. If question is unanswered, questioner replaces panelist. The question may be asked again of other panel members. At a predetermined time those who are panelists are given a prize, such as candy. It is best to require that every student ask at least two questions, then use volunteers.

Charles M. Porter

Grade: 10-12, Ability: high, average, mixed, Practice: basic fiction techniques revealed through short stories

Because the short story is an excellent medium for introducing high school students to the techniques of fiction, begin with that section in the literature text or have students purchase a paperback collection such as 50 Great Short Stories, ed. Milton Crane, Bantam Classic, New York, 1959 or The Pocket Book of Short Stories, ed. M. Sigmund Speare, Washington Square Press, New York, 1960.

Give the students one or two things to look for in a story before they read it for the next day's assignment. Do this simply to allow the conscientious student to prepare for the unannounced short tests which keep them reading assignments. The test always concerns one of the points made about the assignment the preceding day. The next step is to discuss the story on the level of "likes" and "dislikes" for ten or fifteen minutes--the more comments, of whatever nature, the better the preparation for the real work that follows. Feel free to laugh or cry with the comments at this stage, but seldom judge them with words (perhaps judge indirectly with facial contortions).

The next step is to consider the story on four different levels: character, conflict (the same as "plot" in this terminology), theme, and style.

The characters are first determined to be "simple" or "complex." If they are "simple," they are either all good or all bad, never making a significant mistake, or doing a significant service-unchanging and unchangeable. Conclude that the complex characters are more worthy of attention because we are most likely to see some aspect of ourselves in them. Then consider the problem that the character has. If we have a good character (complex) whose major concern is whether or not to feed peanuts to the monkeys at the zoo (however traumatic this may be for him), we conclude that the author has, to a degree, wasted a good character by giving him an insignificant problem. If we have a weak character (simple-single dimension) who is confronted with the Big Question of Good and Evil (Holden Caulfield of *The Catcher in the Rye* suddenly appearing in Act I *Hamlet*), we conclude that the problem is unconvincingly solved due to the inadequacies of the character. And so on.

Next attempt to pinpoint the conflict(s) in the story, determining whether it is essentially internal (man vs. his conscience for some decision he has made or is about to make), external (man vs. man, cold, mountains, seas, heat, animals), or both. Once reaching agreement as to the nature of the conflict, examine the resolution of it for its significance. Then make judgments. If one finds no significance or justification for the action, conclude that the conflict was contrived by the author to carry the story along; it may have been entertaining, but don't place much value in it. Particularly object to authors who allow characters whom we have come to know to die (however sensationally and violently) for no discernible purpose. Analyzing conflict this way makes the spotting of escape fiction very easy.

Always treat theme by generalizing the resolutions of the conflicts, all conflicts, large and small. For example, following are some of the statements phrased in class this year from the stories in Adventures in English Literature, Inglis, Spear, Harcourt, Brace, 1958 (grade twelve):

(1) "Poison"-Ronald Dahl: Dreams or fears can become actualities when the imagination is highly charged; or (2) We sometimes resort to verbal abuse when our weaknesses are exposed.

(2) "Markheim"--R. L. Stevenson: If a man's conscience remains active, there is a point in the commision of evil beyond which he will not go.

(3) "The Majesty of the Law"--Frank O'Connor: We will inconvenience ourselves, sometimes greatly so, in order to teach someone else a lesson; or (2) Being shunned or ignored by our friends can be harsher punishment than a jail sentence.

(4) "All Yankees are Liars"--Eric Knight: It is easier to tell someone what they want to hear is really true; or (2) Truth is a weak weapon when its opponent is national pride.

(5) "The Garden Party"--Katherine Mansfield: In order to understand life one needs to understand how the "other half" lives.

(6) "Acme"--John Galsworthy: The most money is often paid for the story with the least literary merit; (2) Often truly great writers ignore public taste either by choice or by necessity; or (3) Telling the truth at once, notwithstanding personalities, may eliminate useless scheming and mental anguish.

(7) "The Verger"--W. Somerset Maugham: Individuals don't need to be literate to become wealthy.

(8) "The Lagoon"--Joseph Conrad: There are times when we love not wisely but too well; or (2) Love for a woman can cause a man to do regrettable things; (3) There is often lack of understanding between men who possess different racial, or cultural, or national, or religious backgrounds.

These statements formulated, discuss them to make sure they apply to the respective story. Then determine how credible the statement is when applied to life. We find that some are universal to man at any time in any place; others are isolated instances; still others may not be applicable to life at all. In this way, form some final judgement of the worth of the story.

Occasionally make a chart on a group of stories, giving each story from one to ten points in each of the four categories mentioned. A skeleton follows:

	Story 1	Story 2	Story 3	Story 4	Story 5
Character	9	5	2	5	10
Conflict	8	10	5	5	10
Theme	5	5	5	5	10
Style	5	10	4	5	10
	27	30	16	20	40

According to this chart, story 5 would be the best story; and story 3, the weakest. A breakdown of style has not been included since the exercise would be nearly useless without a specific story for reference.

Milford E. Sherman, Centralia High School, Centralia, Washington

Grade: 9, Ability: average, Practice: approaching narrative through scenic structure

In any literary genre, the development of theme, plot, or character can be illuminated by first considering scenic structure. Help students develop a sense of the interdependence of events and shifts of focus by thinking of a work as a sequence of televised or dramatic scenes. This sequential structure can be portrayed graphically, as in the rising and falling of action, or it can be shown in outline form. Write accompanying analysis of theme development and the portrayal of characters' thoughts, feelings, and actions.

Merle M. Mills, Hobbs High School, Hobbs, New Mexico

Grade: 9, Ability: high, Practice: a dramatic introduction to the short story

After discussion of the characteristics of the short story and its development as a genre, begin a study dramatically by arranging the students in a circle, darkening the room as much as possible, and providing soft background music such as Martin Denny's "Exotica." By candlelight, move slowly around the circle reading Shirley Jackson's "The Lottery." At the end of the story, blow out the candle and let the music fill the room for about the slow count of five; then turn the lights on. The reading does not take more than thirty-five minutes and is worth much more in terms of dramatic effect.

Mrs. Lou R. Bond, Sundeen High School, Corpus Christi, Texas

Grade: 12, Ability: high, average, Practice: approaches to short story themes

One approach to studying character and theme in the short story is to assign a short paragraph in which the student must describe a character's appearance, personality, and actions. Then the student is instructed to break up the paragraph with specific illustrations from the story to demonstrate his points. Last, use the problem faced by the main character as a clue to theme. Have each student list his ideas of the problems raised in the story. Ditto these, distribute them, and evaluate them in a class discussion designed to elicit a strong statement of the general problem. When such a statement is developed, the class has usually arrived also at a satisfactory statement of theme. Since clues to theme may also be symbolically presented, it is also helpful to list symbols, contrasting their significance at story level with their deeper suggested meaning. A possible listing from James Joyce's "Araby" might include the title, the blind street, the empty house, colors as in the brown house, yellow leaves, purple dusk, the season, the use of litanies, chants, and prayers, the bazaar, and so on. Such approaches to theme through character and symbol are also effective in stories such as Flannery O'Connor's "A Good Man is Hard To Find," Sherwood Anderson's "I want To Know Why," Kathryn Mansfield's "The Fly," "The Garden Party," and Ernest Hemingway's "The Killers."

Mildred Webster, St. Joseph's High School, St. Joseph, Michigan

Grade: 8, Ability: average Practice: studying short story themes

"What's this story about?" usually prompts plot narration rather than a statement of theme. A possible improvement is to provide a short definition of theme and then discuss several short stories or novels which develop the same idea. Since this age group often lacks reading background, try eliciting common themes by mentioning five or six spy shows or westerns on television. To show the range of treatment possible for a single controlling idea, read six or more short stories about men fighting sharks, bears, mad dogs, or jungle cats, and then turn to a closer study of Hemingway's "Old Man and the Sea."

Robert C. Turner, Harvard School, North Hollywood, California

Grade: 8, Ability: average, Practice: short story analysis

A study of short stories or novels can be introduced by explanation of a few single concepts of literary analysis. Understanding of the importance of point of view, literal-figurative meaning, themes and plot can be tested by giving students an unfamiliar short story to read and analyze after several weeks of directed analysis. Point of view is easy to teach, once the students get the idea that the same story differs greatly when told by different characters. One effective method is to have a class read "Rikki-Tikki-Tavi" and then rewrite it, briefly, as if it were being told by one of the snakes (reminding them that the snake can only tell the story up to the point where he is killed). To show how the story can give a different impression when the point of view changes, ask who was the hero in the original story, and whether the snake would consider him the hero. Then discuss the merits of the snake's point of view. Wasn't he justified in regarding Rikki-Tikki as a villain? This is a novel thought to most students, who assume that snakes must always be villains. Finding a parallel account of an incident told from another viewpoint can also be rewarding. A short eye-witness account from an old zoology book of a fight between a cobra and a mongoose revealed the observer obviously sympathised with the cobra. He made it clear that the mongoose always has the advantages in such a conflict. Comparing this account with Kipling's, the students quickly agreed that Kipling favoured the mongoose and had slanted his story accordingly.

Robert C. Turner, Harvard School, North Hollywood, California

Grade: 7, 8, Ability: high, Practice: supplementary reading

After study of a literary form, e.g. the short story, assign several short stories, perhaps one per week, to be chosen individually by pupils from a recommended list of authors or a selected group of library books. Pupil submits one index card of comments for each story. The same procedure is followed with non-fiction. A restricted list of periodicals (including such magazines as *Harper's*, *Atlantic Monthly*, *The Reporter*, *Natural Science*, and excluding *Time*, *Life*, *Look*, *Saturday Evening Post*), is presented to pupils. They may select any articles which appeal to them. Fiction is not recommended in these magazines. The purpose here is to expose the pupil to periodicals which he otherwise would probably not pick up, even if they are taken in the home. Nonfiction books also are recommended for supplementary reading, but only a chapter at a time. This chapter is often the introductory chapter, especially if the book is on the English language. Articles in anthologies are suggested for enjoyable reading.

Books on language which can be enjoyed by bright junior high students include: Barnett, *The Treasure of Our Tongue*, Knopf; Hall, *Linguistics and Your Language*, Anchor; Laird, *The Miracle of Language*, Fawcett; Premier; Marckwardt, *American English*, Oxford.

Laura Singer, E. O. Smith High School, Storrs, Connecticut

Grade: 8, Ability: average, Practice: arousing quick interest in poetry

To combat a common conviction that poetry is thin stuff, suitable only for sissies, jolt the class into interest with a quick exposure to dramatic poems and contrasting selections without any initial analysis of form or content. Strive simply for verbal effect—the excitement of reading aloud. Using an anthology, begin with a selection such as Alfred Lord Noyes "The Highwayman", having students read several stanzas apiece aloud. Pause only to make the briefest comment or answer questions, move to a short, contrasting selection such as Carl Sandburg's "I Am a Telephone Wire." Again, move to another selection, for instance, Sandburg's "Chicago." Later, one can examine rhythm, rhyme and meter, but stimulate initial curiosity by concentrating on the dramatic effect of speed and attack in oral reading.

Robert C. Turner, Harvard School, North Hollywood, California

Grade: 8, Ability: average, Practice: building appreciation of metaphor

An appreciation of figurative meaning may be developed in many ways. One effective beginning is recognizing the loss of impact when slang is translated into formal English. To a Californian, the word wipeout conveys a much stronger image than its definition "a fall off a surfboard when struck by a wave." Recognizing their own daily use of figurative language, students are much less hostile to non-literal expression in literature. Awareness of how figurative language enlivens even factual writing may be built through selections such as Jean Jacques Cousteau's "Cave Diving."

Robert C. Turner, Harvard School, North Hollywood, California

Grade: 7, Ability: any, Practice: enlivening poetry

Since negative feelings toward poetry often seem caused by study of overly serious verse, begin with humorous material. Start by trying to imagine a world without poetry—no songs with lyrics, no Bible, no hymns, no national anthem, few cheers, and so on. From the humor of writers like Ogden Nash and Richard Armour it is only a short jump to limericks. Students also enjoy writing endings for limerics or complete poems in themselves. Depending on the group, meter, rhyme, feet and other poetic elements can be discussed. Next, parodies and satires provide both reading and writing experiences. Only after such activities have created favorable attitudes, undertake works such as "The

Pied Piper" or "The Courtship of Miles Standish." Some classes enjoy making full-color illustrations of characters in a poem or rewriting "The Courtship" as a play.

J. L. Granander, Stillwater Junior High School, Stillwater, Minnesota

Grade: 8, Ability: any, Practice: building a poetry notebook

After the class has read and discussed a varied body of poetry, study ten poems in depth to demonstrate analytic techniques and poetic devices. Present the poetry notebook as an individual's opportunity to read a wide selection of verse relating to one theme. An assignment sheet may specify the physical format of the book such as the title page, table of contents, introduction, body of book, bibliography. The introduction consists of one or more paragraphs explaining the choice of controlling theme and is graded as a separate composition. The body of the notebook consists of ten poems by different writers with accompanying student comment and illustration. At least one paragraph of comment should accompany each poem; this may be explication, interpretation, or analysis of poetic devices. Art work may be in any medium. A bonus grade is given if there is evidence of a unified progression within the collection of smooth transition from one work to another. Low ability groups may follow same assignment with fewer selections required.

Doris Stockton, Walter Colton Junior High School, Monterey, California

Grade: 9, Ability: high, average, Practice: recognizing rhetorical base in poetry

In addition to recognizing various tropes and figures of speech, students need to realize every poem has some kind of rhetorical base and some development of theme—what John Donne or Milton would have called the poem's "Arguement." To help build this sense of theme and its development, cut poems apart line by line, pasting each line on a scrap of paper. Ask the student to piece the poem back together again, trying to reconstruct the argument. The student pastes his final arrangements on a larger sheet. One immediate clue is detection of rhyme scheme and verse form. Free verse, however, throws the student into a reliance on rhetorical structure and punctuation and, finally, logic.

William A. Tremblay, Tantasqua Regional High School, Sturbridge, Massachusetts

Grade: 8, Ability: high, average, Practice: original metaphors

Appreciation of figurative language in poetry often begins with recognition of imaginative comparisons such as similes, metaphors, personification. Get students thinking poetically by asking "What, in your mind, represents joy, hate, beauty?" and so on. The technique reveals both latent imagination and a student's background. Try "Joy is..., Silence is..., Beauty is..., Black is...," for starters. Some eighth grade samples include: "Youth is indecision. Loneliness is a horse in a flock of sheep. Ugliness is a newborn duckling. Hate is bubbling quicksand. Loneliness is an empty vessel. Hate is a one-way street to the dump."

Sylvia Swede, Kellogg Junior High School, Rochester, Minnesota

Grade: 7,8, Ability: high,average, Practice: new verses for old songs

To begin a study of poetry—and to create some interest in verse itself—try writing new verses for an old song. Introduce the students to an old American folk song, such as, "Puttin' On the Style". Play the song on the piano, then sing it in its original verses. Talk about the meaning of "puttin' on style", how the meaning originated, whether the expression is still popular, if so, with whom. Then suggest that the students try to up-date the verses—write their own verses of modern people who may be "puttin' on the style".

Urge students to create verses about general show-off types, as well as good-natured verses about students and teachers in the school. The follow-up is to have the students (and the teacher) sing the verses at a "sing-out" type of assembly. The delight of singing about their friends and teachers—and seeing the surprised looks of those being sung about—make it all a worthwhile afternoon. I include one sample by a 7th grader:

Students gathered all around
To get their problems done.
Hid the books from Mr. ____ (name of math teacher)
Just to have some fun.
Mr. ____ went along with it,
For just a little while;
But he really knew they were
Puttin' on the style.

Richard Mechling, The Palm Valley School, Palm Springs, California

Grade: 11, Ability: low, Practice: an introduction to poetry

Taking a deliberately slow approach, avoiding teacher comment or explication, begin by reading Robert Frost's "Stopping By Woods On a Snowy Evening." Ask why this piece of writing is poetry. Students usually respond that it rhymes and has "verses." Develop briefly how the poem rhymes and the regularity of the scheme. Ask about the length of the lines and the number of words in each line that "sound louder" than the others. The monosyllables in the first stanza allow students to catch the rhythm and count the number of accented "words" (syllables) in a line. Teach the terms "iambic" and "tetrameter" and write them in the language notebook. Move on to a beginning rhetorical analysis by asking such questions as "Who is the speaker?" "Where is he?" "What is he doing?" "Why does the horse shake his bells?" "Why does the narrator decide to move on?" Students are often able at this point to supply interpretations of the final lines of the poem. Follow this selection with a thought-provoking poem such as Dubose Heyward's "The Mountain Woman" with its depressing, soul-killing setting. Read the poem in its entirety without comment. Ask for a description of the setting and explanations of specific lines. Arrive at meaning through student definition and explanation. The many uses of symbolism may be suggested after students interpret "The scarlet bloom" in the poem. Moving on to other short poems, continue to teach poetic devices only as they appear in context. Other selections might include Frost's "Out, Out —," Bryant's "To a Waterfowl," Longfellow's "The Rainy Day," Whittier's "The Poor Voter on Election Day" and Rice's "Daniel Boone's Last Look Westward."

Thomas P. Story, Boling High School, Boling, Texas

Grade: 9-10, Ability: high, average, Practice: approaching poetry through a common image

Poetry is one area in the English program that often causes difficulty, but a careful introduction to poetry as literature can reach pupils and let them see meaning in poetic expression. A good introductory technique involves the use of several poems built upon the same basic image but offering a wide variety of themes. If the image is clear enough, the pupils can see it for themselves. Skillful questioning will help the pupils recognize the themes. Their discovery of the varied ideas in several apparently similar poems gives them incentive for further reading.

One such image that readily lends itself to this treatment is traveling. A number of poems, short enough to be duplicated if necessary, provide a basic reading list and serve for discussion material for several days: "Travel," by Edna St. Vincent Millay; "El Dorado," by Poe; "On First Looking into Chapman's Homer," by Keats; "The Road not Taken," by Frost; "Reveille," by A. E. Housman; and "Crossing the Bar," by Tennyson. These poems involve in some way a word picture, an image, a metaphorical statement of traveling; yet they range in theme from simple escape through a search for perfection, the discovery of a great book, the decision-making process, a challenge to live abundantly, and a consideration of death. Students cannot miss the idea of travel; they must be led to the themes.

The teacher may add to the list of poems mentioned and he may use such added objectives as seems wise with a particular class. For example, he can discuss a variety of poetic devices such as verse form, meter, rhyme scheme, and the contrast between simile and metaphor.

Barclay M. Wheeler, Pioneer High School, San Jose, California

Grade: 9-12, Ability: low, Practice: approaching poetry through music

One way to convince low ability students they are receptive to and can enjoy poetry is to prove they have been enjoying for years the very thing they say they find most boring and incomprehensible in the classroom. Of course they have been enjoying it under a different name—popular music. But basically, many of the techniques of poetry are readily apparent in the music they admire and cherish most.

Pointing out this similarity usually provokes heated discussion. At the end of the period, accept the students' challenge by allowing them to bring in two L.P. albums of their choice. In return for their reveling in rock 'n roll, the class must follow some listening instructions and allow the instructor the use of these albums to begin the study of poetry. Two selections that have proved successful are *The Barbra Streisand* Album and the Supremes' *Where Did Our Love Go*.

Prior to this class show and discuss two filmstrips—*Sound Effects in Poetry* and *Figurative Language*. Ask the class to look over their notes on these two filmstrips for homework. The next day simply ask them to listen to the records and see if they can spot any examples of figurative language or sound effects which the teacher lists on the board as they listen. As you listen note which songs can best be used as examples. For a home assignment ask them to listen to other songs and indicate what sound effects or examples of figurative language each exemplifies.

Spend the next two days discussing simile, metaphor, imagery, alliteration, rhyme and rhythm and their extensive use in the songs they liked best. Then listen to some instrumental classical music—*Romeo and Juliet* and *Grand*

Canyon Suite—to discover the importance of rhythm and sound effects and the relationship of sound to imagery and meaning while divorced from any verbal statement.

Such a beginning of the study of poetry is an enjoyable one—and also educational. Low ability students have the opportunity to hear classical music and see that its beauty is not really foreign to their ears. More important, they are given some points of reference to help them begin to develop a critical approach to both poetry and music.

Lawrence J. Ondrejack, Mt. St. Joseph High School,
Baltimore, Maryland

Grade: 9-12, Ability: any, Practice: approaching a poem's mood through music

In studying "Kubla Khan" the students seem to derive a feeling for the atmosphere of the poem when they hear a recording of "The Sunken Cathedral" ("La Cathedrale Engloutie") by Claude Debussy. An excellent recording is Walter Gieseking's on Columbia Masterworks ML 4537. The mood of Debussy's work complements the mood of Coleridge's exactly. This poem and music may be used as a lead-in to "The Rime of the Ancient Mariner" or as an outgrowth of the study of the longer poem. Have the students write a short theme which explains their understanding of the mood of the poem "Kubla Khan."

Bill K. Addison, Murray High School, St. Paul, Minnesota

Grade: 11, Ability: high, average, Practice: a listening and writing approach to poetry

As a culminating activity for a study of modern poetry, assign the reading of the specific epitaphs included in the recording based on Edgar Lee Master's Spoon River Anthology. Discuss them briefly from the point of view of Master's presentation and his purpose in the Anthology. Listen to the recording and compare student interpretations of the characters with those of the commercial company. Then assign a two part writing session. The first part, announced in advance, is "Put yourself in the Spoon River cemetery. Imagine whatever conclusion of your life you care to, and write your own epitaph." The second part is an in-class composition comparing a pair of characters from the Anthology. Students use their books and choose one pair from the following list:

> Lucius Atherton and Tom Beattey; Fiddler Jones and Eugene Carman; Margaret Fuller Slack and Lucinda Matlock; Hannah Armstrong and Anne Rutledge; Pauline Barret and Mrs. Charles Bliss; The Pantiers and the Purkipiles; Franklin Jones and Alex Throckmorton; Mabel Osborne and Abel Melveny.

Marion Van Haur, John F. Kennedy High School, Bloomington,
Minnesota

Grade: 11, Ability: average, low, Practice: effective introduction to poetry

About a week before beginning poetry study, discuss the importance of figurative speech in every day language—in advertising, movie and song titles, slogans, and so on. Beginning with the use of alliteration, have the students keep a list for three or four days of all alliteration they hear or read. In addition, suggest that each student compile a list of twenty current or recently popular song titles which are alliterative. Initiate discussion with such questions as, "Is alliteration an important element in our speech and writing today? Could we eliminate it and still communicate effectively?" At this point have the student write riddles, making sure that some figure of speech is used in each riddle. Following a discussion, examine the lists of song titles the students have drawn up. Discussion should be initiated here about the importance of music in our daily lives.

Transition should now be made to the poetry unit. Hand out mimeographed excerpts from three current teen-age songs. Leave sufficient room for student comments. Ask if the excerpts express any motion, mood, or theme. Could any of them be poetry or songs? Here you can define poetry and begin to discuss it. In the 11th grade it is possible to use the Westward Expansion area of American literature to promote poetry teaching. This historical period permits a study of the contributions of the Negro to literature as in poems, ballads and music. The day following the evaluation of the excerpts, play the songs, taped previously, to show the relation of music and poetry. It's possible some students may have guessed your secret by now. Discuss music. Negro, Cuban and white students will all bring forth different views. Planning ahead enables you to schedule the high school chorus to sing ballads or madrigals to each class. Here, too, tapes or records of western songs, songs of Mahalia Jackson, Harry Belafonte, Ernie Ford, Joan Baez, and The Brothers Four may be used. Outside research on well-known historical figures can also be assigned and then related to songs and poems. No one anthology need be used, but if possible a variety might be employed to enrich the unit.

The class should then be ready to write its first poem. Capitalize on the fact that all students have some measure of spirit. Give the assignment that after the football game each student write down how he/she felt (win or lose), and what he/she talked about and did. Have them supply a title. Inform the students that you are going to assign them a total of four poems to write during the unit and that the best one will be placed in a permanent Class Anthology.

A group activity or individual activity is to have the student or students make a collection (or excerpts) of American poems which he finds most meaningful. Have the slower student draw or collect a picture to illustrate the mood (not the title) of each or all poems. Place the very slow student in groups of four or five, where, as a group, they can compile an anthology or write individual poems. Also helpful is the initiation of a poetry-reading contest to determine the best English and Spanish-speaking students in each class. Don't overlook the possibilities of choral reading activities. If warranted, have the better students attempt to produce original poems in imitation of "Spoon River" epitaphs. Again, you might select two poems which deal with love and death; then have the students compare and contrast the attitudes expressed by the author. More than one author may be used. In most instances, especially with the slower student, it is not practical to give a unit test. Some form of memory work either oral or written, might be substituted.

Al Hallberg, Miami Jackson High School, Miami, Florida

Grades: 10-12, Ability: mixed, Practice: poetry study

The first consideration in teaching poems, either as a unit, or as part of a larger study, is the careful selection of appropriate material. Students can be expected, after close study, to understand particular figures of speech, levels of diction, and the relation of form to meaning.

Lucy R. Watson, Park Avenue High School, Franklin, Louisiana

Grade: 11-12, Ability: mixed, Practice: writing haiku

Use haiku poetry as a vehicle for teaching sensory imagery and figures of speech. Study the form by reading and discussing the poems in Haiku Harvest by Peter Bellenson and Harry Behn. Follow the translators' form, writing the middle line in two lines and working more for vivid imagery and for figurative language than the number of syllables in each line. The poems may therefore not be so nearly correct, but students, both juniors and seniors, enjoy this experience. Select the most satisfactory haiku and make a book of your own called Haiku Carnival. Have one of the students illustrate the poetry. Since an experience with haiku, students are much more aware of imagery in literature and much more alert to figurative language.

Jane Coggin, Bridgeport High School, Bridgeport, Texas

Grade: 10-12, Ability: any, Practice: the virtues of nonsence poems

In teaching rhythm and meter in poetry, use nonsense poems to help the students learn the mechanics of rhythm and meter. This system helps them see the structural mechanics of the poetic process without being distracted by the meaning or personal impact of the poem itself. I find that by learning the techniques of poetry in this manner and by practicing writing nonsense poems of their own, students are more aware of the intricate process of composing. In this way, they are able to get away from the vagueness that most of them bring to the writing poetry.

The nonsense poem may illustrate, in addition to meter, various rhyme schemes, assonance, consonance, onomatopoeia, alliteration, masculine and feminine endings, or any other technical phase of poetry. One of the most important outcomes of this use of nonsense poems is that when the students begin to try "sense" poems they are more aware of the composing process and the discipline which it imposes on the writer; they become better acquainted with poetry as a form of writing.

Ruth J. Staton, Jefferson High School, Roanoke, Virginia

Grade: 12, Ability: high, average, Practice: intensive poetry analysis

At the beginning of the year, provide students with an outlined approach to literary analysis which can guide both class study of a work and individual compositions. The main elements in such a close study include the following:

1. Examine the title. Does it have any special significance?
2. Whc is the speaker? What do we know about him? What kind of person is he?
3. To whom is he speaking, on what occasion, in what setting?
4. What is the function or purpose of the poem?
    a. If narrative, identify the point of view.
    b. If descriptive, identify as objective or subjective.
    c. If expository, identify the thesis and method of presentation.
    d. If rhetorical, identify the speaker's premise and his logical development of support. Does he utilize deductive or inductive reasoning, an appeal to emotions?

5. Identify the work's poetic form or type and explain the possible significance of form.

Examples: A. The Epic
Natural Epic
Literary Epic
Metrical Romance
Ballad
Literary Ballad

B. The Lyric
Pastoral
Elegy
Sonnet
Epigram
Heroic Couplet

C. The Ode
Pindaric
Homostrophic
English Irregular

6. Discuss the tone. Examine diction, and denotation, connotation, overstatment, understatement, paradox, and irony.

7. Now outline the poem structurally to show relationships between clauses, phrases, and individual words within the sentence patterns. Examine structures of subordination and coordination most carefully. Check the significance of all declarative, interrogative, and exclamatory utterances.

8. Paraphrase the major divisions of the poem.

9. Summarize the contents of the paraphrase into a single statement of central theme or idea.

10. Discuss the imagery of the poem relating this to your statement of content. Although the word "image" often seems to suggest a visual image, imagery pertains to the evoking of emotion through sense or sensual experience. Images may represent sound; a smell; a taste; a tactile experience, such as hunger, thirst, or nausea; or perhaps movement.

11. Point out all examples of metaphor, simile, synecdoche, personification, and metonymy. Relate these to your statement of theme or content and discuss their contribution to the essential meaning of the poem.

12. Point out and explain all symbols. Identify them as to type and explain their appropriateness.

Examples: a. Freudian
b. Archetypal
c. Religious
d. Literary

13. If the poem seems to be allegorical, explain the allegory.

14. Point out and explain any allusions. Relate

15. Select significant examples of sound repetition and explain their significance as regular speaker, tone, or content.

16. Work out the meter of the poem. Explain the significance of rhyme and rhythm as related to the total aspect of the work under consideration.

17. Now discuss possible relationships existing between sound, sense, and structure. What are these relationships? How are they significant? How do they contribute to the total effect of the poem?

18. Criticize and evaluate the work as regards form and content.
    a. What is the poet attempting to communicate?
    b. Does he achieve his goal?
    c. Does he utilize the most appropriate form?
    d. Is the content of his communication valid?
    e. What have you gained from this experience?

Douglas W. Houck, Williamsville Senior High School, Williamsville, New York

Grades: 7-9, Ability: high, average, Practice: the study of a short poem

A close study of Alfred Lord Tennyson's "The Eagle" accomplishes several objectives: the development of basic techniques of analysis, the awareness of mental images, and the consideration of ways a poem achieves meaning. After silent and oral reading, discuss the poem's structure noting line and stanza length, rhyme scheme, punctuation, and internal contrasts in form and meaning. An analysis of the language reveals poetic devices such as alliteration and provides lexical clues to the eagle's portrayal. Assign the composition of a paragraph describing the mental image evoked by the poem, and encourage the use of vivid adjectives and forceful verbs. A prose description helps students appreciate the poet's terse evocation of the eagle's majestic power. A syntactic analysis may also be undertaken to show how variations in sentence elements heighten meaning.

John G. Cobb, Ardmore Junior High School, Ardmore, Oklahoma

Grade: 11, 12, Ability: any, Practice: enlarging the study of a novel

Nothing seems to enhance the power of a good novel more than related information and direct author - contact. A book like Robert Russell's To Catch an Angel stands on its own merits, but classes particularly enjoy materials relevant to this autobiography of a blind man. Local associations for the blind can loan braille devices such as books, slates, dominoes, alphabets, and playing cards. When classes have a chance to handle and study braille materials, they relate more directly with incidents in the novel. Of course, it is a great privilege for students to talk directly with an author, but a school visit of a blind person could also do much to increase our understanding and appreciation.

Robert E. Kauffman, Warwick High School, Lititz, Pennsylvania

Grade: 10-12, Ability: mixed, Practice: tips on teaching a novel

Plan to teach more than the novel or novel excerpts found in the class anthology. By planning sufficiently far ahead, paperback copies can be provided, either a single title for the entire class or several titles related to a common theme. Have students complete the reading by the first class period. Isolate those elements one wishes to stress (theme, symbols, characterization, for instance), but do not try to cover all elements, catalogs of relevant symbols or thematic treatment of objects prompt scanning or re-reading. A related language assignment may explore diction, dialects, play on words, levels of usage and so on. A composition assignment is often a worthwhile culminating activity.

Mrs. Lucy R. Watson, Park Avenue High School, Franklin, Louisiana

Grade: 11, Ability: high, Practice: studying a novel

Class study of a novel can often be introduced by a teacher-lecture briefly covering the author's life, bringing in relevant literary terms, and pinpointing elements to watch for in reading. In The Red Badge of Courage, for instance, useful literary terms might include naturalism, impressionism, realism and symbolism. Students can be alerted to Crane's treatment of colors, characters, and religious symbols. Assigned reading of the novel is complemented by daily class discussion, in which it is important not to drag discussion, but to elicit answers to thought-questions rather than straight factual queries. Drawings of important scenes enhance the study, as do recordings by dramatic artists. Finally, the enthusiasm conveyed by the teacher is a vital ingredient at any stage of the undertaking.

Courtney Tommeraasen, Slayton High School, Slayton, Minnesota

Grade: 10-12, Ability: any, Practice: teaching the novel

Begin the study of the novel with a brief survey of the development of prose fiction in England and in the United States. Then attempt to put the novel under study into historical perspective, if it will fit, and into its proper literary genre, such as: letter-writing technique, episodic plot, novel of manners, social novel, gothic, naturalistic, stream of consciousness, realistic, allegorical, psychological, science fiction, etc. This provides a standard so that one isn't trying to compare Edgar Allen Poe's fiction with Ernest Hemingway's for example.

The next step is similar to the textbook approach: a specified number of pages assigned each day that the students are accountable for the next day. These pages are discussed to whatever degree they deserve, according to the content, until comprehension has been achieved. Look for the narrative and stylistic techniques of the various authors as they develop conflicts and resolve them. Often the students write statements that will generalize the conflicts and, therefore, expose the underlying intentions of the author. Students catch this technique very quickly once they are shown how to do it.

It often is very unrewarding to discuss a novel with high school students after they have finished reading it. Even the best students are notorious misreaders, skimmers, and readers for plot and for "what happens next." Very little agreement or understanding can be reached because significant paragraphs, pages, and scenes have not been understood; the irony and satire in the style is usually read straight unless this technique is repeatedly unravelled for students so that they become aware of it Moreover, to go back into the book after they have already read it to clarify their point of view seems to invite disinterest. Consequently, try telling the students "what happens" in a story first, so that they can concentrate on "how" and "why" it had to happen and the consequences to the characters left, or involved in the action.

To assure that students read daily assignments, write two or three questions on the blackboard that pertain to the next day's reading. Periodically, give them a ten or fifteen minute quiz on one of the questions. Usually some of the general statements made about the conflicts mentioned above can be expanded into theme assignments. These themes are either analytical or expository: (1)proved by examples from the story; or (2)proved (or disproved) by examples from the students personal experience with people.

Milford E. Sherman, Centralia High School, Centralia, Washington

Grade: 12, Ability: mixed, Practice: seeing literary structure by analogy

Beginning with the assumption that students of lower ability can, in time, grasp the intricacies of a piece of literature, the problem of presentation seems to be twofold: (1) to avoid boring the better student by constant repetition of what he has understood on a first or second explanation and (2) to avoid frustrating the lower ability student who soon begins feeling that he will never understand.

To avoid repetition and frustration, move away from the phase of literature under examination--structure in A Separate Peace, for instance--to an examination of a painting, a building, or even an examination of the physical structure of the classroom itself. Point out that since these things can be seen immediately as a whole, they lend themselves to an easier examination of structure than does a novel which may be several hundred pages long and, therefore, usually requires several readings before anyone can see it as a unified work.

Tell the students to consider recurrent patterns--geometric, in many cases--as one of the elements of structure. Then ask them to look closely at a painting, building, or classroom to discover what pattern best exemplifies these things. For example, we once examined a church which happens to be located directly across the street from the classroom. We noticed that the basic pattern of the church was the arch, a rather triangular one. The students, then, noticed that the building next to the church was modern, one whose basic pattern was the square. Once the students are able to suggest what pattern best describes whatever they are examining; and once they are able to see patterns within patterns, move right back to where you started: structure in A Separate Peace. By now, the lower ability student has a fairly good idea of some aspect of structure, and the higher ability student seems pretty excited to discover that structure is such an integral part of all art media. Moreover, the latter student is ready to pose specific questions about the structure of A Separate Peace and is eager to devise his own schemes.

Examine or re-examine the beginning and the end of the novel, several of the chapters themselves, various episodes in the novel--all to discover whether there are recurrent patterns in mood, theme, tone, characterization, and so on, and what these recurrences mean and how these patterns may be best schematized. (The students come to some agreement as to what the circle, the square, the straight line will represent in terms of the novel.)

Clearly, the basic method used in this lesson is that of the analogy--examining one art medium by examining other art media or by examining freshly objects we see everyday. The introduction of mathematical diagramming helps the students to visualize more clearly and immediately one phase of structure.

Bernard Appelbaum, Germantown High School, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania

Grade: 11, Ability: high, Practice: a thematic study of the tragic hero

A thematic unit devoted to the tragic hero can center about the study of Dostoevski's Crime and Punishment, with students presenting oral reports on some or all of the following: Lazarus, Rousseau, nineteenth century Russian art, sculpture, music, economic conditions, Russian authors, particularly Turgenev, Tolstoy, Gogol, Pushkin, Russian morality, environmental and psychological aspects of crime, alcohol and drugs as causes of crime, and judicial reforms. Related readings may include Cervantes Don Quixote, Miller's Death of a Salesman, O'Neill's Mourning Becomes Electra, Arnold's "Dover Beach," Housman's "To an Athlete Dying Young," Faulkner's "Barn Burning" and Hemingway's "Flight."

Richard Lee Clark, Ottawa High School, Ottawa, Illinois

Grade: 7,8, Ability: high, Practice: ready access to word books

Children will pursue a natural interest in words if resource materials are easily available. If teachers provide opportunity in class for browsing in books on words, pupils tend to become very interested in this language area, often a new experience for boys and girls of this age. A few suggested source books, some of which include word indexes are: Mencken, The American Language, Knopf; Bryant, Current American Usage, Funk and Wagnalls; Ernst, Words, Knopf; Ernst & Thurber, In a Word, Penquin; Moore, Your English Words, Dell Delta; Barnett, The Treasury of Our Tongue, Knopf; Pyles, The Origin and Development of the English Language, Harcourt; and Schlauch, The Gift of Language, Dover.

Laura Singer, E. O. Smith High School, Storrs, Connecticut

Grade: 12, Ability: any, Practice: an introduction to word function

For an average or high ability group, use "Anyone Lived in a Pretty How Town" by E. E. Cummings as an example of word function. For a low ability group use "Motto" by Langston Hughes. Help the students realize that each writer has the same basic material to work with: words. It is what one does with words that makes the difference. Then introduce a piece of writing which exemplifies words in their most meaningful relationships. An excerpt from the Inaugural Address of John F. Kennedy serves this purpose well. An analysis of the poetry and the excerpt usually allows the students to gain a firm grasp of the concept of word function in effective writing.

William H. Peters, Greenfield High School, Greenfield, Wisconsin

Grade: 12, Ability: high, Practice: combining a study of language development with study of the folk epic

A practice that has produced good results is the joining of a study of the development of the English language with that of the development of folk epics, specifically The Iliad, and The Odyssey, The Aeneid, and Beowulf.

Begin with a study of the origin of the European languages from the Proto-European languages, considering the out-breaks that produced the Greek, Roman, Celtic, Germanic-Anglo-Saxon-Nordic, and French-Roman influences in the development of English. Discuss contingencies that cause changes, outcroppings from isolated areas that seem retrogressive but result in dialects, and so on. Stress the non-static nature of language, its continuous process of change because of the influx of new ideas, new needs, and pejoration, extension, limitation, and transfer of meanings. In this part of the study, use maps, diagrams made for class viewing on transparencies, charts, and pictures. Take dialectic polls of common practices and changes in the use of words in your own area. Use the Encyclopedia Britannica Humanities Films and the Henry Lee Smith films on Linguistics and Your Language to supplement the material.

Note similarities in the literature in values and customs, attitudes toward the gods, heroes, country. Similarities of practices of the people in such widely separated areas as Denmark and Greece are better understood in terms of proximity of their origin. For example, Beowulf has many characteristics of its prototypes The Iliad and The Odyssey in its customs of welcome for heroes, feasts to celebrate special occasions, libations to the gods, treatment of visitors, the courage, skill, ingenuity and almost superhuman strength of its heroes, love of country, the role of fate, the treatment of women, and so on. The study may be adapted for heterogeneous groups by concentrating more on Beowulf than the Greek epics.

Dimple E. Hutchins, Longview, Texas, P. O. Box 2302

Grade: 12, Ability: average, Practice: a study of Chaucer's Canterbury Tales

Enter Chaucer's world with the usual background discussion on Chaucer's historical period, his own varied life and unique contribution to literature and thought, and examples of his language. Use the recording in Chaucer's English of the first forty lines of the Prologue, following the reading in student texts. Compare the translation with the original. Discuss the season, the imagery, the tone, and the overall purpose of the pilgrimage with special emphasis on the aura of redemption that shines over the whole work. (If Jesus can forgive the sinners, then surely we---and Chaucer---can.) Most of all, delve into the characters themselves. The students, like Chaucer, seem to give special attention to the religious characters, especially the Prioress, the Monk, the Friar, and the Pardoner. They recognize a descending scale in which the corruption seems to become more and more intense with each religious figure. Inevitably, of course, the Wife of Bath also captures their imagination. Ask students who are artistically inclined to provide bulletin board drawings of the pilgrims.

While studying the Prologue, select several students to prepare special reports on some of the tales, such as those of the Prioress, the Pardoner, the Wife of Bath, the Oxford Clerk, and the Franklin. These tales are easily handled in a high school class, and offer some fascinating insights into religion and love.

When a student prepares a tale for class presentation have him first submit a carefully detailed outline of the narrative. Then in a student-teacher conference, discuss other implications of the tale--philosophic, psychological, and so on. Have the student type his outline on a master ditto, run off copies, and distribute them to the class at the presentation so that everyone has the basic outline of the tale. After relating the narrative, the student discusses with the class various other implications of the tale, going back and forth between the Prologue and the tale to present as well-rounded a portrait of the pilgrim as possible.

Finally, compare Longfellow's sonnet on Chaucer with E. E. Cummings' sonnet, discussing not only the content of the poems themselves, but also the two very different poetic approaches. Write themes on the Chaucer unit on such topics as (1) If I were going on a pilgrimage of some sort, which one of Chaucer's pilgrims would I choose for my companion? Why? (2) Create your own pilgrim and the tale that he or she might tell.

An interesting contrast to the Chaucer selections is a study of Graham Greene's novel, The Power and the Glory. A class will find many interesting and enlightening carry-overs from Chaucer's religious figures to Greene's whiskey priest, Padre Jose, and the lieutenant. The students usually discover they respond with more ambivalence to Greene's characters than to Chaucer's, although they learn to recognize paradoxes and subleties in both works that prohibit easy black-and-white stereotyping of complex human beings.

Lenore Mussoff, Allerdice High School, Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania

Grade: 12, Ability: high, Practice: a study of epic literature

Building on an earlier study of The Odyssey, present Beowulf, encouraging the students to read it in its entirety in the Burton Raffel translation. Use the study of Anglo-Saxon poetic devices--alliteration, caesura, meter, and so on -- as the beginning of a glossary of terms to be expanded throughout the year.

Acquaint students with the problems of translation by offering as many as six different translations of a single passage, weighing from the translators' statements the intention of the work and its success by its own terms. The distinction between the primary and the secondary epic may be made by a later study of portions of Paradise Lost. A class may, for instance, devote several weeks to a study of chapters 1, 2, 9, and 10 of Milton's work.

Elinor A. McLendon, South Eugene High School, Eugene, Oregon

Grade: 12, Ability: average, Practice: a thematic study of "Man and Fate"

A provocative unit combining literature and composition is based on the theme of "Man and Fate." Much of its success derives from two important factors: (1) the choice of readings, and (2) the comparisons afforded by studying these particular readings side by side. Chronologically, structurally and stylistically they are as different from one another as Shakespeare is from Hemingway, yet they can be studied as variations of the same theme.

Begin with Beowulf, recognizing the fatalistic overtones that dominate the mood, structure and plot of the poem. Read aloud the first day with the instructions that the students complete the reading independently.

Discuss the overpowering forces, apparently symbolized by the monsters Grendel, Grendel's mother and the fire-drake, that play such a large part in the poem. Then discuss Beowulf himself and the kinds of power he displays in order to triumph over these forces. Move to the concept of the Anglo-Saxon hero and the kinds of qualities that delineate his heroism, noting that both mortal and supernatural abilities help him to triumph over his adversaries. Note, too, that Beowulf himself combines both a fatalistic and a humanistic philosophy. On the one hand he says, "So Wyrd will be done," and on the other--just to cite one example--he shapes his own destiny by traveling to Hrothgar's country to combat Grendel.

This kind of open-ended discussion about the interaction of the powers of fate and the powers within man himself dominates the approach to all of the readings in this unit. These readings may include such varied selections as:

W. H. Auden, "The Ballad of Miss Gee"
Walter de la Mare, "The Listeners"
W. W. Gibson, "The Stone"

__________ "The White Dust"
John Milton, "On His Blindness"
Ballads sung by Joan Baez (record)
J. M. Synge, "Riders to the Sea"

After relating Beowulf and the Joan Baez record (accompanied by dittoed copies of her ballads), we divide into groups of six or seven students, with a chairman for each group. One group works with each selection. Allow one class period for the preparation of the selections and decisions how to present them to the class. Then, allow each group a period for presentation and discussion. On the day the group makes its presentation, provide the whole class with a copy of the poem, either in their texts or on dittoed sheets.

This block of work completed, read together "Riders to the sea." Finally, write themes on the entire unit. One provocative theme topic is: "Chance rules our lives, and the future is all unknown. Best live as best we may, from day to day." Discuss the validity of this approach to living in terms of two or three readings studied.

Lenore Mussoff, Allerdice High School, Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania

Grade: 7, 8, 9, Ability: low, Practice: teacher-made tapes of literature

Using selections appropriate to your literature program but of a reading difficulty beyond the class level, tape record very slowly and expressively poems, short stories, and so on, providing students with their own texts. Preface the work with a stimulating biographical sketch of the author geared to the linguistic maturity of the class. Difficult sections of the works may be preceded by simple explanations of theme, relationships, or other possible pitfalls. The technique both circumvents the slow learner's limited reading skills and provides a continuity of oral presentation uninterrupted by teacher comment. When simple definitions of vocabulary seem necessary, a transparency of a vocabulary list may first be projected and matched to a teacher-supplied set of definitions. Presented in this way, works such as The Odyssey (Singer text, grade 9 level), "Rip Van Winkle," "The Vision of Sir Launfal" or "The Courtship of Miles Standish" carry meaning and enjoyment for slower sections.

Eleanor Buehrig, East Junior High School, Alton, Illinois

Grade: 9, Ability: high, average, Practice: a study of myths

Begin a three-week study of Greek, Roman, and Norse mythology by providing a wealth of myth collections and interpretation. By making arrangements with other schools, it is often possible to assemble on rolling tables two or three times as many available works by Bulfinch, Colum, Gayley, Hamilton, Murray, Sabin, and Tatlock. Students read widely, reporting in booklet form on a variety of subjects. The second phase of the study is a close study of selected passages from The Iliad and a study of "The Celestial Omnibus," Writing experiences concluding the study include:

1. a comparison of "Cupid and Psyche" and the fairy tale "East o' the Sun and West o' the Moon"
2. original myths
3. compositions on such subjects as "Our God is Infallible; the Greek Gods Were Not" or "Modern Advertising Draws upon the Myths."

Constance S. Gousset, Montebello Junior High School, Natchez, Mississippi

Grade: 7, Ability: mixed, Practice: capitalizing on competitiveness

Mastery of a large body of material can sometimes be encouraged by exploiting group competitiveness. Varied assignments for different ability levels are equated in terms of students' time and effort, and a group's progress is then posted on a master chart. This technique can be used for any assignment common to all classes. In a study of 20 chapters of The Odyssey, three ability levels were asked to cover the same amount of reading with a variety of written assignments. The element of class competition appeals to this age group and spurs them to complete a large basic assignment in preparation for more specific study.

Pearl Bisbee, Andrews Junior High School, Andrews, Texas

Grade: 7, 8, Ability: mixed, Practice: an independent study in literature

This unit, devoted to a study of folk heroes, may be adapted to many other subjects and is marked by its emphasis on individual research, and reporting. Each student is given a bibliography of pertinent materials and a guidesheet outlining the scope of the study, its goals (both in literary learnings and in specific skills), a tentative time limit, and a list of required and optional activities. Guidesheet directions are carefully reviewed by the class, such as the need to complete required activities before undertaking optional ones and the evaluation of activities at the conclusion of the work. Initiative in undertaking independent work is encouraged by providing in the classroom or school library a variety of materials and by deferring class discussion of assigned legends until all have fulfilled requirements. Teacher, librarian, and assistant are available during all periods for consultation.

The study is introduced by a talk on legendary heroes of song and story from many lands. Vocabulary peculiar to the study is presented and written in students notes. The class reads a legend such as "The Cyclone," discusses it, and writes a paragraph or more about some of the funniest "lies" in the story. Several other assigned "tall tales" are discussed and provide the basis for written comparison and interpretation. The student re-tells a story of his own choice about an American folk hero. Questions of interpretation or influence are developed by each student after hearing "Casey Jones." Optional activities include the study, oral reading or re-telling of legends, illustration of legendary incidents, creation of a legendary hero typical of the locale accompanied by a story and illustration of him, serving as the "expert" on a given hero or legend and leading class discussion. A beginning list of some famous legendary heroes might include: Paul Bunyan, Daniel Doone, Windwagon Smith, Sinbad, St.George, King Arthur, Romulus and Remus, The Sooner Hound, Mike Fink, John Henry, David (in Bible), Aladdin, Sir Lancelot, St.Nicholas, Rip Van Winkle, Stormalong, Johnny Appleseed, Joe Magarac, St.Patrick, Hercules, Siegfried, St.Valentine, Odysseus (Ulysses), Jonathan Slick, Moses, Robin Hood, William Tell, Achilles, Jason, and Samson.

Joan C. Young   Howell L. Watkins Jr. High School   Palm Beach, Gardens, Florida

Grade: 9-12   Ability: any   Practice: drawing mental pictures

In an effort to strengthen visual impressions conveyed by written material, two techniques are helpful. One is to describe, in oral or written form, the mental picture of objects, scenes or situations which images convey; the other is to have students draw their impressions. If a student is not artistic, he may use stereotyped symbols. Sometimes simple drafting assignments are quite satisfactory. Students display and explain their drawings in a group-session which often provides the less linguistically skilled students a genuine chance for approval.

D'Orsay W. Pearson   Jackson Memorial High School   Massillon, Ohio

Grade: 12, Ability: any, Practice: literature-related projects

Requiring a semester project which may be either manual or written prompts a great deal of ribbing from one's more completely academically-oriented colleagues. The practice has merit, however, in that students are encouraged to express their own best talent in a deeper understanding of some segment of our English literature curriculum. Despite the possibility of some very sad misses, the successes illustrate this goal at least as well as the customary research papers, and the project has the obvious advantage of banding strictly English concerns with areas toward which the student feels positive. A budding carpenter cannot build an authentic Elizabethan theatre without learning a great many side details which may affect his appreciation of Macbeth. A slower student cannot put together a complex time-line without absorbing some sense of the chronology involved. A student cannot execute a series of pull-down maps without realizing how England's geography has affected her literary product. If incidentally, he extends his competency in his interest, his knowledge of history, and provides his classmates with models that quicken their interest and understanding, this is bonus-not justification. The boy-who-lives-for-music-but-hates-English may develop an increased respect for the demands of form and mood when he takes three very different poems and sets them to original music with arrangements for two instruments. Such a project cheats the student of practice in written expression and research techniques only if he has no other assignments to meet these needs adequately.

Sara Hess, Santiago School, Garden Grove, California

Grades: 10-12, Ability: average, Practice: a ten-step literature study

The following literature study attempts to draw together in a planned sequence a number of related language skills. The ultimate aim is enriched enjoyment of the work and, hopefully, a discovery of fresh personal meanings. The study proceeds as follows:

1. a study of the historical period in which the work was written
2. note-taking from teacher's lecture on the period, writer and the work
3. assigned homework reading on the period and the work
4. related records and films
5. class discussion to co-ordinate previous work
6. oral reading of selected passages by teacher and students
7. oral presentation of research topics related to the work (selected during first phase of the study)

8. a modest comparative study of the work and previously read works or another selection by the same author
9. creative writing assignments can be imitative of some phase of the work or can be contemporary
10. sharing student prose or verse orally culminates the study

Mildred Watts, Wortham High School, Wortham, Texas

Grades: 7-12, Ability: any, Practice: the crazy quiz

Student interest and anticipation can be heightened by occasional use of the Krazy Kuiz Kuestion. The usual technique is the literary pun, stretched as far as your sense of humor allows. If a class is studying *The Canterbury Tales*, a sample might be, "What did the Englishman say to the steak?" "Chaw, sir." Students like to play around with Milton (Mill-town) Spenser (Spend-sir) De Foe (Brooklynese for "the enemy"), and so on. These imaginative gambits can be interspersed in regular quizzes or can be used in the last pre-Christmas period.

William Hartman, Bentley High School, Livonia, Michigan

Grade: 12, Ability: high, average, Practice: developing an objective analysis of literature

This practice is designed to encourage an objective, analytical basis for criticizing literature. Ditto and distribute to each class member a paired list of poems and stories concerned with the same subject matter or theme. Students first must list all facts that they think might be relevant in judging the relative merits of the two works. Secondly, they list all opinions based upon a logical syllogism. Third, they list all assumptions or opinions that they believe all (or almost all) readers would accept. Fourth, they list all opinions or judgments based on enthymemes derived from the preceding statements. (An enthymeme here meaning a syllogism in which one premise is unexpressed.)

At this point, students divide into groups and check one another's statements. The group must decide whether each statement is valid. The student must then write an evaluative comparison of the two works, using only statements that have been accepted by the group.

This practice consumes several class periods and the resulting writing is usually somewhat flat, but students seem to learn much from group discussions as to whether a statement is fact or opinion and as to whether it is generally accepted. The student also learns to recognize and use syllogisms and enthymemes as a part of logical proof.

Charles E. Scharff, Corvallis Senior High School, Corvallis, Oregon

Grade: 10,11, Ability: mixed, Practice: preparing to write

Preparation for composition should include discussion and study of various kinds of prose, as exposition, description, narration, and so on. Students then study closely the particular type of composition expected, selecting a topic from four or five suggestions.

When I am planning to have my students write compositions, I first introduce the type of composition to be written (comparison, analogy, description, exposition, etc.) and the methods that may be used to create the desired composition. The students read and discuss several carefully chosen examples that are of the type to be written. After this has been completed, the students are given several subjects from which to choose (3 to 5 usually). Before they begin the actual procedure of writing, the students discuss what role(s) they, as writers, will play to determine the voice of the paper. The audience, to whom the paper is addressed is also carefully defined, as is the student's purpose for writing. The actual writing may take two or three days beginning with notes which often are merely words in lists. From the notes comes the first rough draft, and from there, the final draft. All work is done inclass, and students have the full use of glossaries, dictionaries, and thesauruses. Keeping such a close eye on each student's work does not diminish creativity and assures carefully constructed compositions.

Barbara Teer Killeen High School Killeen, Texas

Grade: 10, Ability: average, Practice: planning for writing

Preparation for writing is as important as the writing itself. The teacher who takes the time to have students plan thoroughly before writing will improve the quality of student papers immensely. Since a paper based on a story or book read in the literature class can be discussed before the class as a whole, the character sketch often provides a successful writing experience. Th develop a character sketch, students should first focus their knowledge by answering various questions.

If the class is considering Willy Loman in Arthur Miller's Death of a Salesman, ask, "Why did Willy fail?" "Why did Miller choose the salesman as the central figure?" "Why did Miller present Willy, a failure, as a valid modern hero?" "What concepts of American society are brought together in Willy?" The second step is to list items of proof and to group similar and related items. If three major divisions are to be used within the sketch, for instance, proofs may be classified accordingly. A pattern of organization based on I, Willy, a failure as a husband, II, Willy, a failure as a father, and III, Willy, a failure as a salesman would classify proofs: favors stealing (II), mistreats wife (I), lies (I-III), teaches sons false standards (II), and so on. Other organizational patterns could be used for comparison, illustration, anecdote, and so on. After students write a possible thesis statement, they are ready to develop a brief outline and plan a conclusion. The final paper can then be written from the thesis statement, the outline, and the conclusion.

Merle M. Mills Hobbs High School Hobbs, New Mexico

Grade: 7-9 Ability: Average, low Practice: Single sentence composition

One of the more successful practices in the teaching of writing is the assigning of single sentences instead of paragraphs or compositions. The technique has advantages for both the writer and the grader. The student approaches the shorter writing assignment with more confidence. While the teacher soon learns that many junior high students are not capable of writing complete, intelligent sentences, still nearly every student will try. The shortened grading time required by this technique allows for marking errors, upgrading vocabulary, and commenting on all papers. The sentences can be assigned as frequently as the teacher wishes with the students writing longer and more complicated sentences or paragraphs during the year. Handle the problem of topics by fastening one or more colored magazine or news pictures to the tackboard. The less identifiable the subject of the picture, the more variety the sentences will have. Therefore, try to avoid portraits of movie or sports heroes.

Todd Hampton Royster Junior High School Chanute, Kansas

Grade: 7-12 Ability: any Practice: The single-sentence technique

Most problems of composition can be examined and overcome within the single sentence. Begin the year by having students write sentences. Approach this exercise by eliciting from students what a reader may expect to perceive from writing. This usually produces responses like, "I should be able to understand the writer's intention," "I should be able to determine the writer's voice and attitude," "I should be able to perceive the writer's plan." After these responses have been discussed, ask the students to write a one-sentence description of the room in which they are sitting. Collect these sentences and reproduce in dittoed from selected sentences which demonstrate writing faults. These sentences are discussed in class, inductively. They describe several other subjects, moving from specific to abstractions, with the same procedure. Student writing becomes more careful; writing about abstractions means the writing becomes vague, and time is given to writing sentences that classify and then sentences that define. Later, return to specific and afterward go to abstractions. Vocabulary, syntax, usage - all can be taught with a sense of compelling immediacy that is too often lacking. Student revision that follows these class discussions is undoubtedly one of the most significant exercises that students perform. Students keep all papers and are encouraged to refer to them before any new assignment is written.

Howard Haylock Santa Rosa Junior High School Santa Rosa, California

Grade: 7-9 Ability: any Practice: the sentence approach to writing

Composition can be improved by concentrating first on writing effective sentences. Begin by allowing 10-20 minutes for students to compose their best one-sentence description of the classroom. The teacher collects and sorts these, selecting those that reveal accuracy, variety, originality, consistency of viewpoint, or the lack of these qualities. Mimeograph the selections omitting names, and discuss them the next day, calling on students to evaluate their sentences. Point out both good and poor features by contrasting students' work. Return the sentences with written teacher comment, offering encouragement to poorer writers whenever possible. On the third day, students can be taken outside the school building to write a descriptive sentence. Again, the same procedure is followed. Particular problems in writing such as tense shifts, noun-verb agreement, spelling, errors, and so on can be worked into this exercise when appropriate. After writing descriptive sentences, students may write sentences of definition, as for childhood, courage, or other subjects. Gradually students are led to see that the sentence is really the most important element in writing paragraphs. The next writing assignment can logically be the paragraph, based on any of the sentences written for the above assignments.

Stuart L. Feldman Westlake Junior High School Oakland, California

Grade: 7,8 Ability: high, average Practice: building single sentences into a story

Many of us are faced with students who have difficulties writing one sentence which is acceptable, let alone colorful or original compositions. Too frequently we talk of whoe paragraphs and compositions when these students would profit more by looking at one sentence only. However, the one-sentence approach can be dull, and our conscience sometimes bothers us, for we feel that a sentence should be connected to a whole idea, a larger paper. By using the overhead projector one can work on one-sentence at a time which can be placed in a larger framework. Give each student his own visual transparency and require each to buy a black pencil pen or grease pencil. All assignments are written on the transparency instead of paper. Students write a "story" sentence by sentence. The teacher can establish the plot, for instance:

1. Boy loves girl or girl loves boy.
2. Trouble/conflict enters
3. Reunion occurs and conflict is resolved.

Each daily assignment requires one or, at the most, two sentences presenting part of the story. The daily assignments follow:

I SETTING: Write one sentence establishing the mood of your story. Time? Place? Mood?

II INTRODUCTION TO BOY AND GIRL: Write two sentences introducing the boy and the girl. Also establish that they like each other. Divide the information into the two sentences as you wish. Try to think of little ways to show their feelings for each other.

(Continued)

III DIALOGUE: Write two lines of dialogue. They speak. Again try to hint to your reader through your choise of words and your actions that the two like each other. That will make the conflict more heart-breaking.

IV CONFLICT: Enter trouble in the form of another person, an argument, or a misunderstanding. In one sentence present the conflict. You may write a second sentence to show their reactions to the conflict.

V CONFLICT RESOLVED: In one sentence show how the problem is solved, through dialogue and action.

VI REUNION: They lived happily ever after. Show us in one sentence.

Each day, project individual transparencies and analyze how that student has expressed his story through his choice of words, sentence structures, and ideas. The students discuss rather heatedly ill-chosen words or generalities such as "beautiful" or "sparkling blue eyes". Emphasize continually the importance of showing the reader rather than telling him. Point out endings which seemed incongruous with beginnings. It is surprising that, in spite of the simple plots and few sentences, students learn many basic skills necessary in more complex plots and compositions.

What are some of the benefits?

1. Students see graphically the need for revising their first drafts. Suggestions are given in class. Finally both the original transparency and the revised draft are turned in.
2. Students see how even a simple story has to have a thread of continuity running through it. The actions need motivation and the characters must be consistent in their reactions, or reasons for the inconsistency must be presented.
3. They discover how hints about a person's character can be expressed in the careful choice of a single word.
4. They see the waste of time and space in such expressions as "blonde blue eyed" or "medium build".
5. They sense confusion in phrases such as "He walked in like Napoleon after a battle". What does this mean?
6. They enjoy the excercise. In several cases, boys who previously yawned when the words "writing assignment" had been presented, find themselves contributing valid comments to the class discussion.

Marilyn E. Stassen Punahou School Honolulu, Hawaii

Grade: 7-12 Ability: mixed Practice: using generative sentences

A composition unit can be profitably begun by building generative sentences. Have each student write an original sentence. These sentences are stenciled and, the class analyzes each one's form, content, and rhythm. Choose one sentence and together make this a generative sentence. Then have students choose any three sentences from the stencil and make these sentences into generative sentences. Another stencil is made of the generative sentences which are compared with the original on the first stencil. Then analyze some sentences from the literature book and put these sentences into levels. Next begin to build paragraphs with generative sentences. Emphasize that this is not the same thing as "padding" sentences. It should be stressed that short, clipped sentences are used effectively at times and generative sentences are not designed to do away with them. Amplification of this technique may be found in Francis Christiansen's " A Generative Rhetoric of the Sentence" in College Composition and Communication (October 1963) or reprinted in the booklet Toward A New Rhetoric.

Lois Wilkerson Amber-Pocasset Junior-Senior High School Amber, Oklahoma

Grade: 12 Ability: average Practice: generating new syntactic patterns

To teach effective subordination and logical coordination within the sentence, take a piece of effective writing from a magazine, newspaper, or any other source and reduce all ideas to simple sentences. Tell the students the types of sentences used in the original; that is, the number of simple, complex, and compound sentences used. List also some of the stylistic devices employed. They ask the students to combine the ideas in any way which seems effective to them. After their efforts have been evaluated, allow them to compare their work with the original to see other ways of expressing the ideas.

Olga Murley W. W. Samuell High Dallas, Texas

Grade: 12 Ability; average Practice: relating sentence elements

To provide practice in relating pertinent elements, place on the board some five or six groups of related words or expressions from material which has been read for background. Excerpts from historical studies of a literary period are particularly useful. They ask the pupils to take one or two groups and combine them in such a way as to make a significant statement concerning the material studied. Materials may be combined in a particular pattern which has been discussed; for instance, one group might be arranged in a pattern of parallel structure, another might illustrate an introductory clause of concession, and so on.

The value of such an exercise is two-fold. It serves as a quick check on whether students have read an assignment, and it permits the instructor to walk from desk to desk, examining work as they do it and making suggestions for improvement. Many pupils have difficulty relating ideas properly within the sentence, and such exercises as this seem to produce better results than marking the error in a theme and then having it corrected. The practice seems to provide that needed "ounce of prevention".

Olga Murley W. W. Samuell High Dallas, Texas

Grades: 10-12 Ability: average Practice: three basic analytical approaches

Teaching students three basic types of analysis provides them with a useful tool in composition, grammar, and literature. These three approaches isolate either typical class, structure, or operation. This diagram can be displayed in chart form or can be copied by students from an overhead projection.

Kinds of Analyses

Classification	Structure Analysis	Operation Analysis
What is this a sort of? What are the sorts of this?	What is this a part of? What are the parts of this?	What is this a stage of? What are the stages of this?
"A man is a kind of animal."	"A leg is a part of a man."	"Childhood is a stage in a man's life."
KINDS of things	PARTS of things	STAGES of CHANGE in things

Using an overhead projector, demonstrate how to write a paragraph based on a simple classification analysis diagram. Two crude examples follow:

I Types of Writing Instruments in School

Pencils	Pens	Typewriters

Paragraph: Usually there are three types of writing instruments in use in schools. The most frequently used instrument is the pencil. Almost everyone has a pencil. Pens, of one variety or another, are the second most frequently used writing instrument used by students. Last of all is the typewriter. Many students study typewriting in school and use the typewriter to write reports and essays.

II Levels of Reading

Surface	Under the Surface	Deepest Meaning
(Plot)	(Theme)	(Application)

Paragraph: There seem to be three levels of reading good literature. On the surface of the story we find the plot, or what actually happened in the story. Below the surface we find the theme, or what the author is trying to tell us. The deepest meaning of all is ours when we are able to apply the theme to ourselves so that we can live better lives. The best readers read at all three levels.

This technique may also be used in journalism classes. It is easily adapted to almost any topic.

Isham P. Byrom, Jr. Isaac Litton High School Nashville, Tenn.

Grade: 11-12 Ability: high, average Practice: tagmemic principles applied to composition

In teaching composition one can make direct use of Prof. Kenneth L. Pike's tagmemic principles, which may be explained briefly as follows:

There are five fundamental concepts, each of which yields certain definite information, for example:

Concept	Information yielded
CONTRAST	What it is not. (How does it differ from other things more or less like it?)
RANGE OF VARIATION	How much change it can undergo without becoming something other than itself. (In what ways could we alter it without changing it essentially?)
DISTRIBUTION (by class)	Alternatives that might be substituted for it in a particular structure. (What could be substituted for it?)
DISTRIBUTION (by context)	What characteristically occurs with or around it. (In what sort of context—spatial, temporal, conceptual—does it characteristically occur?)
DISTRIBUTION (by matrix)	Location in system or network that simultaneously locates comparable units. (Can it be seen in some matrix that clarifies its relationship to things that resemble it?)

Exercise One: Write an essay describing some item (e.g. a table, king, unicorn) or event (a wedding, jump, blink) in which the total attempt is to say what the unit is not. Set it off contrastively. Then rewrite the same essay varying the style by direct positive description.

Sample: Chalk is not a fountain pen because it does not have a metal point nor use ink. Chalk is not a pencil because it contains no lead and is not encased in another substance. Chalk is not a crayon because it contains no wax....

Exercises then follow to bring forth each of the concepts. None of this is original. Ideas, exercises, examples are all from a booklet, "The Study of Units Beyond the Sentence," a reprint from College Composition and Communication for May and October, 1964. There seems to be no end to the application of these principles to writing—no matter what the subject may be.

Isham P. Byrom, Jr. Isaac Litton High School Nashville, Tenn.

Grade: 11 Ability: low, average Practice: writing a descriptive paragraph

Begin by reading the class Thoreau's "Chasing a Fox". Restrict teacher comment to definition of unfamiliar words or explanation of allusions. After the reading, ask the students to pick out orally specific descriptive words and phrases that made the passage real to them; e.g., the outline of the trees, the aisles of a cathedral, a nodding pine top, and so on. They copy these in their notebooks to re-inforce their recognition of details. Then ask students to find words and phrases to describe the fox, e.g., his manner of running, his body bending "as if there were not a bone in his back", and so on. After a discussion of Thoreau's arrangement of these items, teach the meaning of spatial arrangement by showing how one would describe the classroom from a given vantage point. Moving about the room, have the students tell the view and the arrangement of details to use in a description.

Returning to Thoreau, ask them to mention places they have visited and would like to visit again. Then ask them to describe the spot in a paragraph of 100-125 words: they must select the viewpoint and decide the arrangement, or motion, they would use. They must begin the paragraph with a definite, exact topic sentence. Try to examine and help with each topic sentence. Since this much of the lesson consumes nearly all of the class period, assign the paragraph to be completed in rough form on every other line and to follow a simple listing of outlined details.

During the next class period, the students start their rewriting of consultation on problems. Clarify your requirements for manuscript form, title and other such mechanics. When questions of expression arise, take the opportunity to provide individual help and encourage further genuine questions. The class rewrites their paragraphs neatly and correctly always knowing they will receive help if they ask for it. Collect the papers at the end of the period for marking. In grading, look for organization, unity, and exactness of detail. However, because of teacher help and access to dictionaries, mark heavily for errors in simple punctuation, spelling, subject-verb agreement, and case of pronouns. The students are usually pleased with their products; and in their next writing assignment which follows much the same procedure with another literary passage, they require much less teacher help.

Thomas P. Story   Boling High School   Boling, Texas

Grade: 9-12 Ability: average Practice: six steps in effective writing

To help bridge the gap between students' technical knowledge of sentence structure and the skillful use of this knowledge in writing, try the following approach. Preface this procedure with several weeks of intensive grammar review part, paying particular attention to verbals. In an experiment to fill this gap, the following techniques were used with good results. (Note: Ideas for this came from work done in the NDEA English Institute of Summer 1965, at Texas Woman's University, pertaining to generating sentences.)

I. Experiment with verbals and verb phrases to see how participles, gerunds and infinitives make more interesting sentences.
   a. Give prepared sentences and ask students to combine and condense them.
   b. Give lists of words for students to use in making up their own original sentences, using verbals or verbal phrases as openers or at the end of the sentences.

II. With a model sentence to follow, provide instructions for the formation of sentences, giving the students an opportunity to create original sentences, following set patterns. For example:

Pattern 1: Write a prepositional phrase giving a general location, then write another propositional phrase giving more specific location, then write the verb, then finish the sentence with the subject near or at the end of the sentence.

In the foothills of the Ozarks, on the banks of Spring River, stood the dense and beautiful grove of trees.

Pattern 2: Write the subject of the sentence, then two color words, and finish the sentence with one more color word somewhere in it.

The three lighted candles, lime green, sat in graceful dignity on their black wrought iron holders.

Pattern 3: Personify some inanimate object in a sentence of three or more clauses.

The stealthy night wove its magic around the town, creeping cautiously along the streets, which were darkened minute by minute, and wrapped itself over all as the town clock sounded eight gongs.

Once the process of creativity is set in motion, the students begin ferreting out their own unusual patterns, from various authors they are studying or reading in their free time. Poe, Hawthorne, Emerson, and Faulkner are only a few with rich material to offer.

III. Students bring to class examples of their own discoveries. Use these for future class assignments in sentence practice.

IV. Lead into a study of the paragraph. Examine paragraphs by establishing authors to see how they are constructed, followed by discussion of various parts of the paragraph.
Consider: Interest—aroused by the mood, the opening sentence, and the closing sentence;
Organization—relation of one part of the paragraph to another, details and devices used to enhance it;
Style—adapted to what the writer is trying to do with the paragraph, mature sentence structure, diction that is exact, concrete, rich, and original, and appeals to the reader so that he will actively participate in thinking through the paragraph.

Students' original sentences are built into good paragraphs as they continue to experiment in effective writing.

V. A study of essays gives the students an opportunity to expand their paragraphs. Putting several paragraphs together to achieve a unified whole now reveals a great improvement over the usual run-of-the-mill essay writing.

VI. Eleventh and twelfth grade students should be taught to develop their theries from thesis statements and thesis questions.

Mrs. David Watts   Wortham High School   Wortham, Texas

Grade: 12 Ability: high, average, mixed Practice: ground rules for composition

Although composition instruction varies with the class, a few ground rules enforced for all groups make beginning instruction easier. This is not a one-step process, but it must be started on the first day. Unfortunately it begins on a negative note, but this first ultimatum is quite effective, and there seems to be little neurosis involved. In the first essay students write they are told they cannot use any of the following: I, in my opinion, a lot, ...fact..., as can be seen, and great. The second essay they write is a book review or report. In the opening paragraph they must state the name of the author, the title of the book, and one specific point they are going to make in the essay. In the third essay, they are to again mention the same items as above, but this is to be done in one sentence and the remaining part of the paragraph is to tell how this point will be made. At this point the instruction varies too much to limit what will be done. If the students get off to a solid beginning without waste of words, they then have little difficulty.

Arthur Wohlgemuth North Miami High School North Miami, Florida

Grade: 10,11 Ability: high, average, mixed Practice: using "the speaking voice" in composition

Correction of student compositions by English teachers generally amounts to the teacher forcing "correct" written expression (whatever that is) on a paper. This practice sometimes totally destroys a creative piece of writing because appropriate English may not be at all appropriate for a character. the student is creating. In evaluating creative stories, try to determine "what "what kind of a guy" is speaking and see if the language is appropriate to the speaker. Students love to hear their classmates' stories and enter quite eagerly into discussions of how usage characterizes a speaker. If the speaker uses active verbs, short sentences, contractions, ellipses, and so on he is probably agitated, excited, an active character. If the [illegible] speaker uses passive verbs, no contractions, longer sentences with dependent clauses, and considers carefully what he has said he is probably a thinker perhaps somewhat educated. Students begin to see that writing is a matter of choosing a style in a particular situation. Appropriateness of language must be discussed in terms of the characters and the situation they are in.

It then becomes quite easy to convince students that a literary man is a conscientious craftsman. He has deliberately chosen language to characterize a speaker, just as the student has done in his work. This "speaking voice" technique correlates the teaching of language, literature, and composition. Moreover, the slower student is not inhibited; if he knows he cannot write flowery educated English he knows he can write language appropriate to some kind of speaker. Usage is thus viewed as a choice to meet the demands of a created situation. Students become more flexible writers because they use more than one style.

Louise DeSalvo Woodridge High School Wood-Ridge, New Jersey

Grade: 11, 12 Ability: average, mixed Practice: The SSAP theory of composition

When teaching composition, make use of what is called the SSAP("sap") theory of composition. The letters represent the following terms: speaker, subject, audience, and purpose. Teach students to identify themselves as speaker with a knowledge of the subject matter (i.e., their authority to speak). Generally, the position of the student is recognized as such, therefore the speaker concept seldom requires much attention. Urge students to develop as much knowledge of the subject matter as necessary for presenting an intelligent composition. Additional reading and research is recommended whenever necessary. Consideration of the type of audience to be addressed is the third phase of the theory. In every piece of writing the students are encouraged to have a particular audience in mind. This should be a body of people; not one person. The final phase of the theory is the purpose for writing a particular composition. (This has no relation to the fact that the teacher made the assignment). Either given a topic or selecting their own, the students must decide their own approach to its development, and the choice of development will often be determined by the purpose the students have for writing (to inform, to entertain, to persuade, and so on). Presenting either paragraph or essay development in this manner helps students communicate ideas effectively.

James P. Cox Soldan High School St. Louis, Missouri

Grade: 9-11 Ability: low, mixed Practice: an oral approach to composition

Many youngsters have little difficulty expressing themselves orally in English class discussion or in delivering a report. They see the need to organize material carefully, to note the way the listener reacts to what is being said, to control the voice so that it says what the speaker intends. They question, react, and inter-act with each other. Yet when these same students attempt to write their ideas in a logically constructed manner keeping a specific audience in mind, they may experience difficulty. We can, however, show students that "talking the theme" and "writing the theme" may be related processes. Granted, the language of oral English is not that of written English--at least for an English composition. Because he speaks in fragments, the younger student may write in fragments and not be offended by what he has written. There - their - they're presents no problem in speech, but it does in writing. The voice stress and pitch help the listener to understand what the speaker says. Many students develop a confidence in speaking their ideas that they do not reflect on paper. But, the English teacher can listen to and more precise oral use of langauge and show that written language is only a variant form of communication.

To help students gain confidence, have them talk the theme before they write it. The teacher may provide a thesis statement, the first sentence of a paper. In class the students develop a paragraph sentence by sentence. One student gives a second possible sentence, which the teacher writes on the board or on the overhead projector. Another student provides a third sentence. Bit by bit the paragraph develops as the teacher halps them with such sentence variety or subordination or transitional elements. They begin to see that sentence four is dependent upon what is said before or after it. They see what happens if the speaker just stops talking when he reaches a specified number of words. They see that one good word might take the place of several, that repetition is sometimes effective, that though the speaker uses stress, pitch, and juncture for punctuation, the writer must indicate meaning by specific graphic punctuation. Another day the teacher might break the class up into three or four smaller groups. Let each group take the common thesis sentence and see what kind of a paragraph they can build with it. Then, compare the paragraphs from each of the various groups. Another technique is to let group one provide sentence two, another group, sentence three, and gradually build up to a well-developed paragraph. However, these initial class activities should be oral, with the student gaining confidence in his speech in order to improve what he finally writes.

Marlan A. Davis Maine Township High School South Park Ridge, Illinois

Grade: 7-12 Ability: any Practice: oral composition

The aim of this technique is to develop skill in impromptu speaking before a group. Sit in the back of the room and introduce students as people with unusual jobs or having done unusual things. The student does not know who or what he is until the moment he is introduced. He then must come to the front of the class and effectively answer or evade questions put to him by his classmates. The technique requires ability to think on one's feet, to role-play, and to parry sudden nasty questions to which one has no technically sound answer. These sessions can be hilarious or so serious the students ask if the speaker is inventing his answer or telling the truth. It is a fine loosening-up approach too, if the teacher wants to go on to more formal speaking. A few possible identities might be a New York cabbie, a draft card burner, a mother of twelve, a founder of a new religion, a woman surgeon, a psychiatrist, a dog catcher, a mountain climber, an author of "Dear Abby" column, a zoo keeper.

William Sullivan Rippowam High School Stamford, Connecticut

Grade: 9-12 Ability: any Practice: overhead projection of writing samples

Teacher-made transparencies for use with the overhead projector help demonstrate various kinds of paragraph development. The initial preparation requires working out a logical sequence for teaching different types of paragraphs and finding a variety of models to illustrate these types. Selection of models may be based on two criteria: the paragraphs should illustrate specific structural qualities (standard development, formal definition, comparison and contrast, for example) and they should have some additional value either in being selected from literature to be studied or in defining or illustrating technical terminology used in literary analysis. After transparencies of the illustrative models have been made, analyze them inductively in class. Use two or three paragraphs and point out additional ones in the standard text. The initial student-writing assignment normally follows a suggestion made by Arthur Carr in his Commission on English kinescope; the structure is confined, while the subject is left open. Subsequent assignments may be based upon literature: for example, "Compare Beowulf and Satan," or "Develop a definition of satire." Evaluation will depend on structure, accuracy of information, thought content, diction, sentence structure, and syntax. Students' paragraphs also serve as models of good and poor writing. Remove pupils' names and make transparencies of those selections illustrating weaknesses and strengths. As often as possible, try to select papers which illustrate some desirable feature: good paragraph structure, use of parallelism, effective diction, and the like.

Mrs. D'Orsay W. Pearson Jackson Memorial High School Massillon, Ohio

Grades: 9-12 Ability: high Practice: imitating an author's style

A composition assignment requiring close duplication of excerpts from well known writers helps familiarize students with a variety of writing styles. Mimeograph excerpts, one or more paragraphs long, from outstanding authors and present different styles at a rate of approximately one a month. The student, working outside class, is allowed a week to compose a paper, directly duplicating the author's style. The compositions are written on ruled paper with the author's words on one line in ink, the student's words directly underneath in pencil, and the third line is used for corrections or revisions by the teacher. Ask students to write on a different topic from the author's, supplying their own title, and maintaining proper tense, tone, and atmosphere throughout. Outstanding compositions may be read aloud in class and varying subject choices may be compared and discussed.

Lou R. Bond Sundeen Junior High School Corpus Christi, Texas

Grade: 10 Ability: low, mixed Practice: relating persuasive reading and writing

Students in low ability groups benefit from a dual reading-writing exercise in which the teacher utilizes the overhead projector. In studying the newspaper editorial, one of the important objectives is to help students distinguish between a presentation of fact and opinion. First, a straight news story is projected on a phase of the Vietnam conflict; then, an editorial offering an interpretation of the news. Here, a quick juxtaposition helps students see how an editorial writer uses a line of reasoning, and language (especially modifiers) to give a "slant" on a story. A strict definition of "objective" was given, and the "straight news story" was re-examined in that light, again with the focus on uses of language. Finally, two editorials are presented: one, a representative "Hawk" position; the other, a "Dove" position. Again, by juxtaposition, students are helped to see how important language is in the shaping of ideas. Other areas of focus in this lesson are vocabulary and the structure of the paragraph. Students are called to grease-pencil the topic sentences and number sentences containing details related to and supporting the topic sentence.

Now the teacher assigns an essay to the class. A great deal of material has been presented in class, so that the students are not going into the essay "cold". The teacher asks them to incorporate some of the new words they have learned, to organize their paragraphs on the model offered in the editorials, and state and argue some definite thesis.

Usually, the resulting essays are superior to previous essays as a result of the highly structured assignment. Later, one can pass out dittos with three main ideas and thirty details and ask students to arrange the details under the proper main idea in accordance with some principle of organization, as spatial, logical, chronological, and so on. The students learn that reading-writing is a two-way street, that much of what they read is organized on the same principles we try to teach in composition.

William A. Tremblay Tantasqua Regional High School Sturbridge, Mass.

Grade: 12 Ability: high Practice: organizing by a thesis statement

One of the very difficult processes for a college preparatory senior to understand is the importance of organization in an impromptu essay test. To help students, one can structure the topic by dictating a controlled thesis statement at the beginning of the period to guide them in organizing the paper. For example, in a British literature survey course for college-bound seniors, one notices their impromptu themes leave much to be desired. The students know the material much better than their essay tests reveal. Many good students are still struggling with an outline, while other students are writing furiously, regurgitating information not necessarily relevant. For the most part, the papers lack any sense of purpose. Therefore, try at the beginning of the period dictating a sentence, pointing out that *every* student must use this sentence as his opening statement. An example might be, "Elizabethan poetry is romantic, dramatic, and bucolic." Ask the class to agree that the paper would have five paragraphs: the statement of purpose (which probably needs only one more sentence), one paragraph for each of the three characteristics, and a conclusion. No student can begin writing for the first five minutes, except to make a working outline. The students seem relieved because they know where they are going; make sure before hand that the students know the meaning of the word *bucolic* and that by *dramatic* one is referring to the three masters of the Elizabethan drama. The papers without exception are much improved by this approach. An essay test on the eighteenth century might begin with the sentence "Eighteenth Century British prose is_______". Ask them to provide the three main characteristics. All students agree on two basic characteristics: that it is journalistic as well as satirical. Some students may forget that Alexander Pope and Burns could not qualify as representative of eighteenth century *prose* style. But every student ends up with five well-organized paragraphs. Is this technique too mechanical? Too structured? It was Pope who also said, "Those move easiest who have learned to dance".

Marlan A. Davis Maine Township High School South Park Ridge, Illinois

Grade 10: Ability: any Practice: controlling the topic through a metaphor

To teach students to limit themselves to one idea in a short paper and to help them express themselves more vividly, begin by having a class read Carl Stephenson's short story, "Leiningen versus the Ants." The use of military terminology throughout the story is obvious and makes it easy to help the students to understand the use of a metaphor to create not only a tone, but a clearcut impression. Follow this lesson by having the students write short themes of one or two paragraphs using one metaphor throughout. This device enables the students to keep their paragraphs "on the topic" because they cannot wander too far afield if they are trying to fit the paragraph into a definite metaphor. Some metaphors that younger students like to use include

water
a storm
music
dancing
the beatnick
old age
a sport
cars
animals
architecture
war
school
a grocery store
money

Ruth J. Staton Jefferson Senior High School Roanoke, Virginia

Grade: 10-12 Ability: high, average Practice: strangling wordiness

When teaching a composition lesson, concentrate first on one major writing fault: wordiness. Assure the students you too recognize the difficulty in writing competently, but convince them they can learn to write well. The first step is killing wordiness. To help them distinguish between a tight sentence and a wordy one, offer several examples of the latter on the blackboard. Their job is to revise the wordy sentence so the idea remains the same but the words are drastically reduced. Begin with a typical sentence dealing with a student's reaction to one or another phase or literature, i.e., analysis of character, theme, or structure. For example: "I think that one of the most interesting characteristics of____'s character is that he is filled with innocence." Read the sentence aloud several times. Most hear that something is wrong but are not sure what it is or how to correctthe fault. Count the number of words, and then suggest that reducing them may be a good beginning. Several students offer their revisions. Usually it is an improvement over the first sentence, but suggest that further reduction is possible. Placing the further suggested revisions on the board, continue until the students have revised so drastically that what was onee a nineteen word sentence becomes an eight word one: "Innocence is one of_____'s most outstanding characteristics." Point out that what they've done is construct a sentence in which every word counts a tight sentence. The reader does not become bogged down by unnecessary words. In most cases, a tight sentence is a forceful one. Now they must write a paragraph devoid of wordiness. Tell them to strangle the superfluous words; what remains are good, tight, forceful sentences.

Bernard Appelbaum Germantown High School Philadelphia, Pennsylvania

Grade: 7,8 Ability: high Practice: incorporating new vocabulary in composition

Students often admit a limited vocabulary hampers writing. They agree reading is one of the best vocabulary-builders. The trick is to note and record new words as one reads. To encourage this skill, have pupils append a list of about eight words, with definitions, to note cards for an oral book review or to a written review. These words should be new to the pupil and in his opinion probably useful for future compositions. The lists are accumulated and held ready when working on a composition. As the pupil revises his work, he tries to use at least one of the words from his list. A variation of the same technique is to have the student select a topic about which he enjoys writing, e.g., ghosts or space. By reading a short story or an article on the topic, he compiles a list of about eight words which might be useful in writing on the topic. He writes a short composition deliberately incorporating those terms he thinks apt. This helps the teacher check usage and catch misconceptions, such as "the sylvan", "the consternation of the body", "his fingers trepidated".

Laura Singer E.S. Smith High School Storrs, Connecticut

Grade: 9-12 Ability: high, Practice: the use of transition

One of the most effective ways to encourage unified and coherent writing is to employ the principles of transition. Fortunately, the uses of transition may be taught easily and with a high probability of success. The first step is to identify for the students (or, better yet, have them identify from materials you have prepared) at least these four common elements of transition: (1) the use of transitional words like "however," "nevertheless," "next," and phrases like "on the other hand," "in the second place," etc.; (2) the use of pronouns to rename elements of previous sentences; (3) the use of synonyms; and (4) the judicious use of repeated words. Next have students find these elements to transition in something they have read at home: a newspaper or magazine article, an encyclopedia entry. (It is always a good idea to make students aware of the existence of grammar and composition outside of, as well as within, the English classroom.) Ask a few students to read their passages aloud, omitting all the transitional elements first, and then reread it, including the transitional words and phrases. They can see from this exercise that transition is not only helpful, but absolutely necessary. Additionally, they will discover that much of what sounds difficult---the concept of transition--is actually something simple and commonplace. After this identification of transition in someone else's writing, students should write one paragraph, in which they use as much transition as possible, even more than they think necessary. Ask them to underline all the devices they use.

The next point to make is the use of transition between paragraphs. Again the use of prepared materials can precede the students' finding inter-paragraph examples of transition in their own reading. Finally, ask the students to write the topic sentence of an imagined second paragraph, with the topic of both the former paragraph and the imagined, subsequent one given by you. For example, the topic idea of the first paragraph could be "His interest in golf"; the topic idea of the second paragraph, "His interest in tennis." A topic sentence of the second paragraph could be "Although he was interested in golf, he played tennis even more." This sentence, while introducing the topic idea of the second paragraph, also includes an easy transition, or bridge, from the first paragraph. Here are some additional pairs of paragraph topics: (1) My algebra teacher is a ham actor and his interesting methods of presenting material; (2) The cost of a new house and their decision to remain in the old home and remodel it; (3) The school band and the school chorus; (4) The use of imagery in one Frost poem and its use in a second Frost poem. Through this method of writing the topic sentence of a second paragraph, the students learn that they can both introduce the second paragraph and link it smoothly with the first with only one sentence. Classroom presentation of such sentences, written by the students, makes such learning stick.

Finally, should emphasize the use of transition in the next few writing assignments. Soon its use becomes almost habitual, with the result that themes become both more coherent and unified.

Theodore W. Hipple   Homewood-Flossmoor High School   Flossmoor, Illinois

Grade: 7 Ability: average Practice: varying the viewpoint

Students of literature need experience in identifying points of view; students of composition can benefit from writing to create a specific impression. To combine these objectives students can write of the same literary incident from a variety of points of view. Two examples of this teaching practice can derive from reading Thurber's "Snapshot of a Dog" and Mansfield's "A Doll's House". In the former story, Thurber tells how his dog Rex becomes engaged in a fight with another dog on the car track. The student sees the incident through the eyes of a boy who feels great love and pride for his dog. Other points of view from which the student might write about this episode include that of the streetcar conductor whose way was blocked, the owner of the other dog, a fireman who was called in the emergency, a person in the crowd, or a passenger in the streetcar. In the Mansfield story, the two little urchins are ordered brusquely from the courtyard by Aunt Beryl after they've been invited in by Kezia to see the doll house. The reader views the action through an observer who not only sees, but knows about the individuals involved. Retelling that incident from the first person point of view of any one of the participants (Aunt Beryl, Elsa, Lil, or Kezia) or from the point of view of an objective observer would be a useful task in composition.

Kent Gill   Davis Junior High School   Davis, California

Grade: 9 Ability: high, average, mixed Practice: encouraging descriptive writing

The following is a composition exercise using any of the senses except sight. The class is to describe a recent experience using sound, touch, taste, or smell. They can use a combination of the four or just one. The object, of course, is to develop stronger descriptive writing. Preparing for this exercise seems to be fun for these groups and the results are satisfying. Procedure is as follows:

1. Have students close their eyes and listen to all the sounds. Give them a minute and ask what they heard.

2. Distribute copies of a paragraph and read it to them, pointing out the use of the various senses. The alternative to use the overhead projector and emphasize the example with the use of different colors—red for sound, blue for taste, and so on.

3. Give examples of experiences they can write about:
    a. super market shopping
    b. a walk down main street
    c. eating in a restaurant

4. Let them write ———The results are worthwhile.

Nick Belich   Quaker Valley Junior High School   Sewickley, Pennsylvania

Grade: 9-12 Ability: high, average Practice: encouraging concreteness

According to the old Chinese proverb, "One picture is worth 10,000 words." A writer, however, might defy Confucius himself to find 10,000 pictures that would as effectively transmit this sermon as the six *words* of the proverb. But the message itself, that concretences illuminates ideas which abstraction obscures, is a sermon all writing students need. Point out that the technique of clarifying a generalization by restatement in an easily visualized narrative is venerable. The fables of Aesop, the parables of the Bible, and the analogies of Plato are but precursers to the heavy modern dependence on anecdotes to illustrate a theme. Every student of expository writing can profit from a lesson on the connotative power of the word and the evocative power of the word picture. Begin the lesson then by sliding backwards down a simplified abstraction ladder. (See Hayakawa, *Language in Thought and Action*, pp. 165-185). For example, take a word like *man*, meaning *mankind*, and progressively narrow the visual image down to *a man*, an *officer*, an *army officer*, and specifically a *second lieutenant*. For a writing assignment employing the same principle, provide a list of generalized ideas and ask students to choose one and illustrate it with an anecdote from real life. The list of subjects varies with the maturity of the class: try common garden-variety proverbs, or epigrams from a literature anthology or selected quotations from ancient, modern, or Oriental pundits.

Go through the list in class to be sure that the students understand what each aphorism means, but the essential step in making the assignment is for the teacher to concretely illustrate the process of being concrete by developing a sample anecdote. Outline an incident to fit one of the subjects on the list and then let the class fill in the concrete details that add blood, sinews, and flesh to the anecdote. A series of questions (How old were the children? What make was the car? How much money was lost?) will help the students understand what they must do with their own anecdotes. Each student must be cautioned to select an incident from his own experience (or his uncle's or his friends'), for actual happenings provide a wealth of concrete details. Fictionalizing must be kept down to essential "poetic license." Professional writers do not make up anecdotes—they keep a file of them. Students soon grasp the basic idea that concreteness in written work is supplied by names, dates, places, references to the text, and quotation as well as analogy. After this lesson let them point out to you that the poets in the anthology, the writers for *Time*, and even advertisements always prove that one word picture is worth 10,000 abstractions.

Anna Lou Klein Mission High School San Francisco, California

Grade: 7 Ability: mixed Practice: seeing and using detail

The purpose of this assignment is to acquaint students with a work of art which stimulates an awareness of details in everyday life and demonstrates the usefulness of details as a device in writing. Elizabeth Bishop's poen "The Fish" is a marvelous description involving supprising details and comparisons. After reading the peem, the class can pick out for discussion the various comparisons—the skin is like "wall-paper," the flesh is packed in like "feathers" (here it is well to draw a fish's backbone on the board and point out its structural similarity to a feather), the swim-bladder is like a "peony," and so on. It should be emphasized that this description goes beyond a simple picture of the exterior of the fish; the writer actually describes the guts as well. Also, the class should read the poem with an eye for color which is splashed over the poem, and they should look for the internal and end rhymes, alliteration and repetition. After examining the poem carefully, ask the class how they might apply Bishop's technique to a description of a car. What does the outside of the car look like? Is it an old car ("battered and venerable and homely"), is it a new car, a hot rod, a bus? What does the car look like inside? And what can they write about the working parts of the car? How about the black oil, the mechanism of the engine, and all the little colored wires? At this point, the boys are eager to help out with words such as crankshaft, muffler, carburetor, and so on. Then go back to the poem and note that it begins with the act of catching the fish and ends with the act of throwing it back. In between these two simple actions is the description. Suggest that they follow this plan in their composition. Now the students are ready to write. Usually more than half of them write poems, although prose is perfectly acceptable. As a culminating activity the students tape their papers and intersperse the recording with car noises and songs about cars.

Mary C. Tyler   Healdsburg Junior High School   Healdsburg, California

Grade: 10,11 Ability: any Practice: developing awareness

Before a study writes well he must consider what he has to say important. Therefore, relate composition assignments to the student's immediate environment and deliberately develop habits of concentration and awareness. This particular series of three assignments seeks to reveal new dimensions within experience previously taken for granted.

1. In the evening a student is to sit outside his home, close his eyes for five minutes and concentrate on a sound or sounds. He should then describe one or more individual sounds and his reactions to them.

2. During a typical evening the student is to sit inside his own home, close his eyes for five minutes and listen. He should then describe one or more individual sounds and his reactions to them. Observations comparing outdoor and indoor sounds are encouraged.

3. The student is to taste a vegetable either before or after cooking but without any seasoning. He must try to accurately describe the reactions of the taste buds.

Prior to this assignment there is a thorough reading and discussion of three works of literature: The Miracle Worker, (drama) and H.G. Wells, "In the Country of the Blind" (short story), which point out the importance of sense perception, and Erich Fromm's "The Practice of Art" (essay) which defines concentration, its conditions and its effects.

Thomas B. Deku   Trenton High School   Trenton, Michigan

Grade: 10-12 Ability: low Practice: overcoming haste in composition

Several years of composition work with the low-ability student show that the problem with the slow student is that he records too quickly what he wants to say. The result is a mixture of strange and impossible phrases—phrases, however, he does not use in speech. To test this theory, take some of these phrases, write them on the board, ask students to read them aloud, and then tell whether anything seems wrong. (Some of the phrases: a men, the girls does, I want book, and so on). In every case, the students recognize almost immediately what is wrong. The class responds enthusiastically to the lesson. The slower student simply does not read carefully what he writes, and with some instruction he could learn to write better. Assigned a paragraph on courage—a unit found in many literature anthologies, tell them to write about a personal incident which demonstrates their own courage. Suggest that there is no need to record a real event. Imagination - lies, if you will-will do just as well; in fact, better. Prepare yourself for some preposterous accounts. Mark the papers carefully and write the word Read at each incorrect phrase. Also point out fragments and run-ons, but concern yourself with these three areas only. Other comments deal with a general impression of the paper.

Bernard Appelbaum   Germantown High School   Philadelphia, Pennsylvania

Grade: 9 Ability: mixed Practice: using classic comic books

Classic comics are strong motivators for slower students. If the books are stored when not in directed use, their appeal stays high. One possible use of the comics is to relate grammar study, literature, and paragraph development. The following one-week project also presupposes knowledge of three standard techniques of characterization. On Monday, students select and read a classic comic paying particular attention to characterization. Notes taken on technique are handed in with the completed work on Friday. On Tuesday, the students begin writing a structured paragraph by developing the introductory sentence which must begin with a subordinate clause introduced by although. In this sentence they must tell what a character has overcome or withstood in order to achieve prominence. On Wednesday the students are to prove in three sentences (one for each characterization technique) that the character has overcome or withstood certain experiences. One sentence must contain an absolute possessive; one is to have an appositive; one is to include a noun clause used as the subject. On Thursday the students construct the concluding sentence to prove the introductory sentence. They rewrite the paragraph in ink according to theme requirements. On Friday have each student read his paragraph, a device which also sparks interest in some great classics. Collect the comics, the paragraphs, and notes for evaluation.

Patricia Byrd   Ardmore Junior High School   Ardmore, Oklahoma

Grade: 9 Ability: low, average Practice: varying writing assignments

Like most of us, students enjoy variety. The composition program can be enlivened by varying regular assignments with some of the following ideas:

1. Expanding a simile : students take a sentence, "Life is like a river", expanding the idea to fifty words.
2. Revising a composition to exactly one hundred words.
3. Following the exact structure of a passage, like the first paragraph of the "The Fall of the House of Usher", but changing the mood completely.
4. Following study of the use of Roget's Thesaurus, writing a class litany for Christmas.
5. Preparing scripts from favorite literature selections to be presented over the speaker system to all junior high school classes.
6. Writing sense impression paragraphs about a particular hour of the day.

Constance S. Gousset Montebello Junior High School Natchez, Mississippi

Grade: 10,11 Ability: mixed Practice: a composition notebook

An effective means of keeping a student's work available for discussion and revision is to use a composition notebook. Students write on alternate lines and on one side of the page only. After the teacher's evaluation of an assignment, the student makes simple corrections on the line above the error. Revisions in sentence structure and organization are written on the page opposite the error. Thus, a comparison of the original and the revision can be made easily. Individual conferences with students are especially beneficial in improving composition, and they are improved by reference to the student's notebook.

Mrs. Alice H. Albertson Springfield Public Schools Springfield, Minnesota

Grade: 10,11 Ability: high, average, low Practice: keeping a composition journal

By asking students to keep a composition journal, the teacher can channel daily entries into broad categories useful for future essays. For instance, entries relying heavily on sense perceptions expressed in concrete and connotative language can provide the material documenting "What My Senses Mean to Me". Entries which are predominantly subjective, emotional, or introspective provide source material for a culminating personal philosophy of life. Preparation for such an essay also includes excerpts from "Meditation I" of The Meditations of Marcus Aurelius, in which the philosopher gives specific credit to those people who have contributed most to his development. The assignment seeks to reveal to the student the extent to which other people have made him what he is. The student is to write a short essay in which he:

a. describes one person who has influenced him. (If the influence is a negative one, the student should identify by a fictitious name.)
b. defines the influence
c. describes the extent of this influence in his development and life.

***low ability groups are not expected to do the following:

d. circles good diction he wants the corrector to consider when deciding the mark.
e. identifies the grammatical structure used at the beginning of each sentence in the essay.

Thomas B. Deku Trenton High School Trenton, Michigan

Grade: 11-12 Ability: mixed Practice: updating a language notebook

In an effort to bring the English notebook out of the realm of the necessary evil and into focus as an organic part of the English curriculum, rename the various sections of the notebook. Instead of a section for "Assignments" we try "Memoranda." Write out detailed instructions for theme assignments and dictate them. These are kept as memos and are numbered consecutively and accumulated for an entire year. The section that used to be "Study Notes" is now "Necessities of Life." Here accumulate all material of a permanent nature: outside reading information and other data, vocabulary work, mimeographed material for study, and class notes. All tests, dictations, and practice exercises of any nature are kept in a section called "The Common Clay." These are the clay from which develops the ability to form "Brain Children"--our themes. The final section of the notebook is called "Luxuries". Once each six weeks each student writes at least one Luxury. This effort may take any form and may be any length; it is an unassigned assignment. If there is no Luxury in a student's notebook, count 25 points off the notebook grade. Don't, however, grade the Luxuries. Do read them and write a short comment but don't put any other marks on them. Frequently submit Luxuries for publication in a school paper.

Mrs. Jane Coggin Bridgeport High School Bridgeport, Texas

Grade: 12 Ability: mixed Practice: using varied composition topics

A chronological study of English literature creates awareness of the various styles and forms of writing. Texts such as Arthur Mizener's Reading for Writing encourage compositions. Although it taxes the teacher's eyes and ingenuity, require 200 to 500 word papers weekly on topics with some intellectual shock, such as Blake's "Opposition is True Friendship". After the students have written their opinions, advise them to let the paper "cool" and then re-write it to correct any grammatical errors and to improve coherence. Poorer students may be asked to comment on a process explained in Home Economics pamphlets or Shop and Automobile manuals. A political or school event may be examined for its merit or lack of merit, especially if it has a parallel in the literature lesson. By proposing provocative subjects for writing, try to develop both an appreciation of the language and an evolution of the mind.

James L. Monroe Kimberly High School Kimberly, Idaho

Grade: 11 Ability; any Practice: an autobiographical composition unit

A composition unit can be effectively organized around a student's past, present, and future. Do not tell students this initially, but begin by having them write short paragraphs on such topics as "Early Recollections", "First Day in School", "A Frightening Experience", "An Early Buddy", "The Most Unforgettable Character". As time progresses, get into such topics as "Spare Time", "Favorite Classes", "School Concerns", "Problems", "Teachers", "Family Ties", "Friends", "People", "Qualities I Like in Friends". At last write about "After School", "Immediate Plans", "A Vague Wish", "What Am I", "Where Am I Going?", and "What can I Offer?".

Now tell the class after discussion of organization and all the other mechanics of writing, that they have just completed a set of papers which could be used for the writing of an autobiography. They see the basic organization, and with a review of their papers they have a much better perception of themselves for the writing of the longer paper. While the unit is going on, they work in groups, learning to correct their own as well as others' papers. They work individually, and they may even put their paper on the overhead projector and present it to the class. For the most part, the students hate to leave the unit, for they have had an opportunity to write extensively about their favorite topic-themselves. The autobiography also provides a good basis for job or college applications.

William Hartman Bentley High School Livonia, Michigan

Grade: 11 Ability: high, average Practice: seeing composition as an art

Effective composition is an art dependent on both skill and insight. Help students recognize this fact by using this technique. Place a bowl of branches on a table at the front of the room and have students make a simple crayon sketch of what they see. On the back of the paper, they are to write their names and the number of minutes they worked. On the second day, again looking at the same object, they write a paragraph describing what they see. Meanwhile, the teacher selects drawings which illustrate:

a. little time and effort, therefore, superficial treatment
b. much time, but no talent (inability to use tools well)
c. accurate representation
d. artistic, but inaccurate, representation

The teacher also selects and reproduces paragraphs which illustrate the same critical judgment. On the two successive days, the class studies both drawings and paragraphs to bring out the following:

a. that instruction in composition in an English class strives for C (accurate representation)
b. that the end product is dependent on what the artist or writer brings to his subject
c. success, or excellence, is dependent on the mastery of the tools and techniques
d. that b and c are dependent on background of education and experience
e. background makes possible original approaches and insights and interesting use of the langage.

Jennie F. Halapatz Baldwin High School Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania

Grade: 7,8 Ability: high, average Practice: developing a sense of the appropriate

Most of us agree it is important that students become sensitive to appropriateness in language and art. But how do we teach such an evasive concept? Frequently when pupils begin to respond to a sense of unity and fitness of words, sentences and compositions or color, shapes, and pictures, they learn an appreciation and love for tautness and unity of expression. Perhaps one approach is to acquaint students with small parts and help them choose an appropriate framework for these small items. Take your student on a Field Trip of the Senses. Do not send them out with a wave of the hand to observe nature, but give dittoed instruction sheets with timed periods (blow the whistle when the time changes) in which they concentrate on one sense only. First they jot down only what they see; then they write what they are feeling through their body; then they observe and write what they smell, and what they hear. The children return with scattered observations jotted in their notebooks. The next step is to choose an approriate framework to express what they saw or felt or heard during the trip. By studying their observations, they select the best form to convey that experience, perhaps free verse or rhymed verse, or a children's story, or an essay.

Another method to teach appropriateness is to use the young people's love for the ballad and folk song. Their knowledge of arrangement and type of accompaniment can be exploited to reveal the muscian's unity of purpose. All elements, all small items should be selected with a purpose in mind.

The next project is observing unity in art. Study pictures. Why that wavey line? Why that streak of red instead of lavender or beige? The discussion of appropriateness in art leads to another project students enjoy. Each selects a member of the class whom he describes in a three line "peem". In the first line they must use words to describe a big feeling or impression of that person. In the second line they describe a physical picture of the student, and in the third line they make up an appropriate name for him. Then they use water colors to draw the impression of their student. The poem lines must be brief. Only a few establish a rhythm, but most of them do create images which focus upon their student and his characteristics. Some of the water colors are a series of shapes, some animals, and some recognizable faces and figures, but all—the picture, the three lines, the color—must point to one purpose. They must show this person to us. Thus children learn a sophisticated concept when we can help them work with words, paints, music, and ideas. They get the feel of unity in expression by selecting appropriate items to fit their chosen framework or selecting suitable frameworks for their observations.

Marilyn E. Stassen   Punahou School   Honolulu, Hawaii

Grade: 10 Ability: any Practice: ethos and pathos in writing

A study of ethos and pathos in writing rests on the belief that the way we present ourselves and know and appeal to the strengths and weaknesses of our audience is as important as what we have to say. But admittedly, practice is necessary in the classroom, before a student can feel secure in presenting himself in the best possible way. Therefore, over a period of several days, assign students a pamphlet and several speeches: "Common Sense," "The New South" by Henry W. Grady, four speeches by Abraham Lincoln to different audiences, and, finally, Patrick Henry's speech to the Virginia House. On the first day, explain the principles of ethos and pathos in speaking and writing, drawing on many teen-age situations to illustrate the point. Then go through "Common Sense", pointing out how Thomas Paine tried to show different facets of his character that he thought would be appealing to his students. Explain the make-up of his audience and point out passages that might be expected to evoke an emotional response, naming the response anticipated. For the next several reading assignments, instruct students to be able to explain similar passages during classroom recitation. Finally, after reading and discussing Patrick Henry's speech, give students the following writing assignment:

1. Pretend that you are either Mrs. Patrick Henry or Patrick Henry's brother, Louis. You have just read a copy of Henry's speech and are writing a letter to him about it. Some possible ideas you might incorporate in your letter are:
    a. You agree that the country should go to war, but you feel he should not have spoken so strongly right now.
    b. You feel he gave a beautiful speech, but you do not agree that the country should go to war.
    c. You think it was a terrible speech.
    d. You're not in the least interested in the speech or the war.
2. Ethos: On your paper, write a short description of the type of person you are. Concentrate on your inner characteristics and predominant emotions, rather than your physical appearance.
3. Pathos: On your paper, write a short description of Patrick Henry, your husband or brother, as you imagine him to be. Try to base the personality you describe on the person who comes through his speech. You may, however, add imaginary characteristics.
4. On your paper, below the character descriptions, write your letter to Henry, putting across your ideas on his speech, but presenting them in such a way that your character, which you have described, comes through. Also, be sure that you very carefully try to appeal to his strengths and weaknesses, which you have described above.

The next day in class call on different students to read their letters. All the students are instructed to listen carefully, trying to piece out what kind of a person is writing the letter, and to what kind of person it was written. After the reading, everyone has some idea to contribute and the guessing goes on heartily, supported with direct quotes from the reader's letter. Finally, the reader is asked to read his own description of himself and Henry. If it agrees with what the other students have deduced, it is obvious to everyone that the writer has done a good job of conveying ethos and pathos. If it does not agree, it is very easy for the students themselves to point out what might have been done differently and what contributed to the wrong impression. This assignment works equally well for all intelligence levels. The higher intelligence groups usually have more intricate characterization, but they also are more skillful at presenting their characters. The lower groups may not have as cleverly worded letters, but neither do they represent very complex characters, so the class is usually able to interpret the characterization successfully.

Jone Starr St. Francis High School Little Falls, Minnesota

Grade: 12 Ability: high Practice: developing materials in a poetry unit

If the teacher enjoys collecting and sharing poetry, perhaps writing poetry himself, a very effective poetry unit can be carried on without a published text. The material, original from both students and teacher, and from the little magazines and other publications, is dittoed and distributed, a few each day. As a number of poems may be by contemporary or relatively unknown poets, students have a completely fresh reaction to them. Include some personal new or old favorites. Have each poem read aloud by either teacher or student, discuss it without heavy technical analysis, re-read it and move on. Try exposing students to symbolic language such as that found in Buddhist writings or the fresh imagery of children's speech and writing. Try anything to shake the class out of a merely logical approach to reality and language.

At the same time,assign a minimum of 20 lines of poetry weekly, (not necessarily in one poem). Strive for freshness and concreteness. At the same time, require an imagery exercise in which students must try to "see" any object as five things other than itself. Ditto the most original of these and share them in class. This exercise triggers more poems. Gradually, fresh, original writing comes in. Hugh Mearnes' Creative Power in Youth provides the theoretical explanation: the teacher must reward students' sparks of originality and must put them before the class with praise and encouragement. Such a personal approach requires some suspension of formal rules and scholarly analysis, but it provides the encouragement that beginning writers need. Continue to put the best of their original work before the class in frequent mimeographed material.

Examples from the imagery exercise include the following:
- the sea ... a corner of everywhere
- a dog ... a fur coat with a cold nose
- a mailbox ... like a god, it may predict anything
- weeds ... the non-conformists of the grassroots society

Here is a sample of student poetry:

"Go camping?"

"But it's snowing,
air's cold
food's bad
I'll keep my warm bed."

"Yeah, but..."

"Well, what's there,
What's in it?"

"No people,
no cars
no sirens
no lights
no noise
save a raccoon who
doesn't know
about Viet-Nam,
no chain saws
for awhile anyway."

"I'll keep my warm bed."

Hypocrisy

Doors that say "Do not enter"
Should not have handles.

Contact Lenses

Teary-eyed I walk around
Blinking like a caution light.

Untitled

i walk an alley and scrawl billboards - her name in big red letters
until my crayon is worn thin.

William Sullivan Rippowan High School Stamford, Connecticut

Grade: 11 Ability: average Practice: limiting a research paper

Students often have had such bad experiences with research papers that the mere mention of them brings forth great groans of anguish. Rather than have eleventh grade students spend all the time and effort necessary for a full-fledged research paper which may reinforce their dislike of this paper, use the following assignment: students choose their own topics, based on individual interests and reported primarily in periodicals. Using the Reader's Guide, find all the articles written on that topic in the past 20 years. (The 20-year span was arbitrarily set. It puts so many volumes of the Guide in use that the whole class can work in the library at one time.) In addition, a student must locate all the school library references dealing with his topic. Students submit bibliography cards to be checked for form and content. Then they alphabetize the list and present a typed working bibliography. Spot-check these bibliographies against the materials in the library for completeness. Finally, have students write papers two to three type-written pages long. In the paper the student explains why he chose the topic, what procedure he followed, what problems he encountered, what he learned about his topic, what he originally planned to do with the topic, and what he thought he could now do with the topic were he to continue.

The project achieves many desired effects, not the least of which is a more thorough knowledge of the workings of a library and practical experience in using a bibliography. Perhaps the biggest effect, however, is the students' recognition of the importance of limiting a topic for research. Some of them find that the topics they choose have over a hundred sources. Each is told he has one of three choices to make: (1) carry the research through to completion;

(2) limit the topic to some phase or aspect of the original; (3) choose another topic. Most quite readily choose to limit the topic.

Robert E. Kauffman   Warwick High School   Lititz, Pennsylvania

Grade: 10-12 Ability: average, low, mixed Practice: a career-oriented research paper

One justification for the high school research paper is the chance it can provide students to explore possible career choices. Limit the topic to "My Career" and require regular library research as well as written requests for information from colleges, vocational schools, and industries. Vary the length of the paper from 1500 to 3000 words depending on the class's ability. By teaming with another teacher, such as the social studies instructor, both content and mechanics of the papers can be checked at specific intervals: letters, the preliminary outline and working bibliography, note cards and the first half of the rough draft, final outline and the second half of the rough draft. These periodic checks prevent procrastination and minimize plagiarism. By eliminating many errors before the final draft, the checks also simplify final grading. The subject is important to all ability levels since few students have thoroughly investigated the career choices open to them.

Ruth S. Johansen   Tyler High School   Tyler, Minnesota

Grade: 12 Ability: high, average, mixed Practice: relating literature and the research paper

Since the research paper is often a cumbersome undertaking for both teacher and student, make the unit more immediate and concise by giving the following assignment: From either contemporary or historical fiction, select a theme related to individual or group behavior. Find six contemporary non-fiction references supporting this theme. For example, Ayn Rand suggests in Atlas Shrugged that the welfare state tends to atrophy individualism. A student selecting this theme as the basis of his research paper would need to incorporate in the paper at least six current non-fiction references bearing out this contention. Control the length and complexity of the assignment by limiting the body of the paper to three pages plus an introduction and conclusion. Require a minimum of seven footnotes written in correct style. In cases where the theme has been selected from an older work, documentation from current non-fiction sources serves to emphasize the "truth" of the book today.

Arthur Wohlgemuth   North Miami High School   North Miami, Florida

Grade: 12 Ability: high, average, mixed Practice: writing from a cluster of works

To get away from the so called "senior" theme or mislabeled "research" theme, compile a list of 40 to 50 "clusters" of literary selections to use as the bases for serious themes. Each selection in a cluster has a common element with the other selections in the group. After reading allof the selections, the student must isolate what he considers the common element and then work out a plan for his paper. This plan may be an outline or a paragraph setting forth the general proof of his thesis. He then arranges to discuss his plan with the teacher to assure that his ideas are concrete and well organized.

Use the PMLA handbook as a guide for footnotes and bibliography. The student is allowed to read several professional criticisms of either the selections themselves or of the authors; then he is ready to tackle the theme itself. Allow class time for the writing of rough drafts in order to help the students get their themes into a coherent form. Quotations from the literary selections provide footnotes and relevance to the text of the themes. This particular device helps the student to handle the mechanics of a documented paper and avoids the fallacy that high school libraries, or public libraries in the average community, offer the materials for "research" papers in literary literature. Some clusters of literary selections with comparative elements include the following words: Moby Dick, Giants in the Earth, Night Flight; Macbeth, Emperor Jones, An American Tragedy; Don Quixote, Candide, Screwtape Letters; Candida, The Doll's House, Pride and Prejudice, Vanity Fair; "The Lottery", "The Crucible, "A Piece of String", "The Turn of the Screw"; Book of Job, J.B., Faust, Part I; Of Human Bondage, Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man, Jane Eyre; Anna Karenina, Madame Bovary, The Scarlet Letter; The Hairy Ape, Huckleberry Finn, Red Badge of Courage; Huckleberry Finn, Catcher in the Rye, A Member of the Wedding.

Ruth J. Staton   Jefferson Senior High School   Roanoke, Virginia

Grade: 8,9 Ability: mixed Practice: a genuine letter of application

As genuine motivation for a business letter of application, try holding a day, or half-day, each spring when the highest grade assumes all teaching, custodial, school board, and administrative posts in the school. Students write letters applying for the particular position they wish, describe their qualifications, and arrange to consult with the person in the post about the specific assignment. All applications are voluntary; those not wishing to participate write a letter but label it "fiction". The students gain a new respect for the profession and are also encouraged as future teacher recruits. As many as 100 eighth graders have been involved in 50 different teaching, custodial, school board, and administrative assignments in one system, but it is best to limit the number of students assigned to a given teacher to two.

Robert L. Temby   RedOak School   Highland Park, Illinois

Grade: 11-12 Ability: low Practice: business letters and job applications

One unit of work in which slow students participate actively and effectively is built around the practical business letter they will have to write someday and the filling out of application forms. The more realistic and practical the unit is, the better the students will work. First, spend time talking of the nature of business communication; the concern is not memorizing the names of the parts of a letter, but rather the students' recognizing the need for absolute clarity in their writing. Some oral work on their previous compositions generally helps the students realize they do not always communicate what they mean.

The students must write three kinds of business letters: an order, a request, and job application. For an order, they must find an advertisement of some product of the type frequently ordered by mail which they might like to own. They write a formal letter ordering the article, and to their letter they attach the clipping which attracted them. For their letter of request, they must select some community where they would like to spend a vacation and then compose a letter to a chamber of commerce seeking information on the community. For their letter of application, they must find a suitable ad in a help-wanted column. This they formally answer, and again they attach the clipping. By means of the clipping, the teacher can check the accuracy of the contents of the letter. With this last letter, the students also fill out a job application similar to those available at state employment offices. Stress the need to get clearance from people before using them as references. While the above assignments may seem quite routine, they are meaningful to the slower students who recognize immediately their practicality.

Barclay M. Wheeler Pioneer High School San Jose, California

Grade: 9 Ability: any Practice: practice in handling application forms

The ninth-grader will soon be faced with filling out applications for positions -- the college-bound student for summer employment; the dropout for a "career" job; the high school-bound to help him through school. To provide practice in quick and accurate responses secure from industries samples of application blanks. Make transparencies of these samples and instruct students in the practical problem of filling out blanks. If students can work their way through the application-form jungle, they may land a job. The class can devise sample questionnaires as well to provide additional practice.

Question: Where were you born? Answer: St. Anthony's Hospital.

Question: Your phone number: Answer: 46-33859

Question: Name of reference: Answer: World Book

Eleanor Buehrig East Junior High School Alton, Illinois

Grade: 12 Ability: average, low, mixed Practice: using guest speakers

Using community resource persons as guest speakers in a composition class can directly improve basic writing skills. Each speaker can stress the importance of effective written communication and show its direct relation to other positions in the same organization. In one class a gentleman from the personnel department of a large corporation mentioned the importance of submitting an effective letter of application. He let students view some thermofax copies of inadequate letters of application from which he had removed all identifying marks. These letters and his presentation convinced many of the students that it is imperative to write clearly and concisely. The use of community speakers extended the importance of writing beyond the classroom.

J. Harper Pike Keokuk High School Keokuk, Iowa

Grade: 9-12 Ability: high, average Practice: evaluation techniques

One penalty of English teaching seems to be a heightened sensitivity to errors in spelling, punctuation, and capitalization. To improve the objectivity of composition grading, remove some of these prejudicial elements before the paper reaches the teacher. Have students exchange completed compositions and mark in pencil any mechanical errors. After five or ten minutes, have the papers returned to their owners who make any needed corrections before turning them in. Another worthwhile practice to be used sparingly is to completely refrain from marking errors. In this composition, see only virtues—in structure, diction, sense, logic, language, and style. The only marks on the paper will be complimentary, and the students' attitude toward the work will be accordingly positive and receptive.

Charles M. Porter

Grade: Ability: Practice: peer analysis of student writing

This technique incorporates a number of related steps. The most central is students' written analysis of their classmates' work. Begin with a discussion of an essay selected because it demonstrates a particular writing technique. Consider only content first; then discuss the technique. While class periods are devoted to the analysis, the class is working on the rough draft of a related topic outside class. Set aside a day to quickly check rought drafte of these papers. Final drafts are handed in and checked by the teacher in one night for glaring grammatical errors only. Student papers are distributed the next day so that each student has another student's paper; each student writes an analysis of the paper. Within a few days, the papers with student analysis attached are collected. The teacher thoroughly checks both the paper and student analysis, making extensive comments on both. Both the teacher and student analyses attached to the original are returned to the writer for revision of the theme. The revision is turned in for analysis by the teacher. Further correction or revision as needed is made by the student and the paper is kept in his theme folder.

William H. Peters Greenfield High School Greenfield, Wisconsin

Grade: 9-12 Ability: high, average Practice: group composition

To challenge students to work for original expression, try group composition for a poem or story. For example, capitalize on an unusual occurrence by putting a relevant first line on the board and inviting the entire class to add to it. If snow, for instance, is an unusual event, after a snowfall write on the chalkboard, "Blanket of white over bed of green" and ask the class to continue the poem. Anyone can add a line, but the class must decide whether the line is in keeping with the tone, mode of expression, rhythm, and thought. Often the class will change a word or phrase in a porposed line or will reject the entire line. In this way, the class composes sonnets, ballads, poems of free verse, blank verse, haiku, tanka. This practice gives students a "feel" for the unity of tone and mode of expression poetry requires.

This same practice may be used in composition, though here the students work in groups of no more than five. In compositions by groups, originality of expression and organization are given equal emphasis. This group work challenges the more able students to guide their groups and it helps the less able to see what makes for finesse and polish in writing.

Leola G. Williams Threadgill High School Greenwood, Mississippi

Grade: 9-12 Ability: average Practice: group revision of compositions

Use groups of three to five students to jointly revise and correct short themes or paragraphs. The original materials needing revision are duplicated as they were received by the teacher and given to the groups to revise for grammar, mechanics, sentence sense and structure, originality, and organization. Revisions completed, the entire class discusses the original and the suggestions. If an opaque projector is available, duplicating can be minimized, as long as the anonymity of the writer is preserved.

Leola G. Williams Threadgill High School Greenwood, Mississippi

Grade: 11 Ability: low Practice: tabulating writing errors

When working with low ability students, it often helps to have students keep a record sheet of types of errors in composition and the number of occurrences of these errors in successive papers. In keeping with this practice, periodic use of the opaque projector to show individual students' progress through two or three compositions encourages the entire group and gives credit where credit is due. Require at least one revised copy made from the original corrected copy for each assignment. In this way, all errors can be corrected and marginal suggestions can be incorporated in the revision.

James P. Cox Soldan High School St. Louis, Missouri

Grade: 8,9 Ability: high, average, mixed Practice: using lay readers

An experimental theme-writing program can be based on the voluntary services of lay readers with teaching or writing experience. Groups such as the P.T.A. are helpful in procuring such readers on a trial basis. The readers are asked to look first for the strong points in each theme and to comment on them. Then they are to make tactful comments in regard to improving two or three of the faults in the theme. Above all, keep the student writing and do not overwhelm him with criticism. As long as a flow of written communication continues, we can try to channel and refine it, but if the flow dwindles away and stops, we can't do much about it. So our first concern is to keep the student writing, no matter how poor the writing was. Have most of the themes written in class. Choose the subjects carefully to stimulate honest opinion and original expression. The accelerated class might be asked to apply the quotation "Tragedies are caused by unwise decisions," to one of three pieces of literature they had discussed: _Romeo and Julient_, _Sohrab and Rustum_, and _West Side Story_. The average class might write one theme comparing the school attended by David Copperfield to their own.

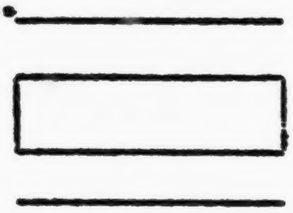
As the themes acculuate, each student receives all his themes from the reader before he writes a new one, and the reader gets all the past themes back with each fresh one, so that student and reader can always look back to see what has been said previously. After six themes have been written and read, the readers receive an evaluation sheet with each student's file. On the evaluation sheet the reader is asked to indicate the student's strongest and weakest writing skills, the amount of progress he has made, what he needs to work for specifically in the future, and a rating on a scale of Superior, Excellent, Good, Fair, and Below Average. The students then receive all their themes and the evaluation sheet from the reader. One class period is devoted to studying the themes, corrections, and the evaluation sheet. Then the students are asked to write a theme on the subject "How the Theme-Writing Project Has Helped Me." Such a project has the obvious advantage of expanding the composition program by lightening the teacher's load. It also encourages the students by providing regular, personal evaluation of their work.

rs. Theodora M. Hallin   Woodland Junior High School   Fayetteville, Arkansas

Grade: 9 Ability: high, average Practice: a shorthand for teacher's comments

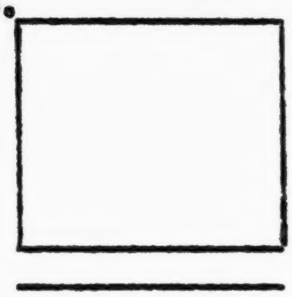
Teachers frequently need easy ways to communicate with students about their written work. In checking the structure of paragraphs or compositions, teachers may find the following sketches helpful to communicate quickly the basic structural weakness of the work. The sketch is placed at the top of the student's paper.

A.



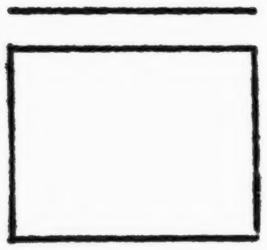
lacks development

B.



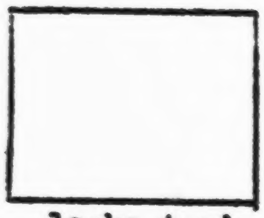
the lack of a topic sentence does not seem justified

C.



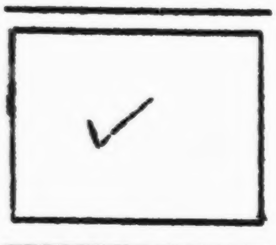
the lack of a clincher sentence to round off your paper does not seem justified.

D.



lacks topic sentence; lacks clincher

E.



muddled body (lacks unity & coherence)

Stanley I. Koki District Office Honolulu, Hawaii

Grade: 12 Ability: high, average, mixed Practice: a composition clinic

When students have accumulated six or more essays, essay tests, and other extended prose samples, a composition clinic often pinpoints persistent errors and provides opportunities for overcoming them. Schedule the clinic for three days of English classes devoted only to writing problems and plan to do large group, seminar, and individual work. Tell the students to look for repeated errors first. They are to list these errors(run-on sentences, faulty pronoun reference, misspelled words, errors in agreement and in tense, and so on) and the number of times they occur. These sentences with errors are then rewritten. Next, the students turn to faults such as ambiguity, illogicality, vagueness, and other large problems. Here the students work in groups, helping each other to find better means of expression. Because the papers grow out of literature read and discussed in class, a common body of material allows students to help one another. The students then write a perfect paragraph in which they discuss their own errors and some suggested plans for overcoming them. This paragraph is not to be a mere list, but an honest self-appraisal. Discourage promises to do better since students really only write well when they have a great deal to say, when they are "full of it" concerning some particular subject. The clinic is not the whole answer to improved composition. But it certainly helps.

Elinor A. McLendon South Eugene High School Eugene, Oregon

Grade: 7-12 Ability: mixed Practice: computing the grade level of student prose

Students enjoy computing the reading ability needed for understanding their prose. The level is indicated by the Fog Index found by combining the average number of words per sentence and the percentage of three syllable words used. Multiply the sum by .4 to find the grade level at which a person must read to understand the sample. Obiously, a sizeable sample of writing should be available to make the estimate valid and students cannot be told in advance that their writing will be measured. However, the assignments should include mention of the potential audience, probably their peers. [illegible]
[illegible] improve their scores.

Ninth graders have scored from 2.7 to 10.4 reading grade level in one class. Low-scorers work on vocabulary and sentence development to improve their scores.

Lois Wikerson   Amber-Pocasset Junior-Senior High School   Amber, Oklahoma

Grade: 7 Ability: mixed   Practice: awarding anonymous writing

In a two-week creative writing unit, free students' abilities by allowing them to work anonymously. Ask each student to select a pen name and write it on a slip of paper with his own name. For dramatic effect these papers are put in a box, sealed, and stored in the school safe until the end of the unit. From then on all writing is done under the cover of the false name. Each day a certain phase of writing is discussed and probed (finding perfect adjectives, using strong verbs, combining short sentences for emphasis, polishing topic sentences, using transitional words, organizing paragraphs, writing clincher endings, and so on). Each day there is a homework assignment, sometimes only finding fresh adjectives or writing a few sentences but sometimes writing a whole paragraph. Each day the papers are collected face down and their order scrambled before they are handed in. Each night read them all and single out the best. These receive the golden pen award and are displayed on the bulletin board the next day when students arrive.

The golden pen is a simple device that provides incentive. From yellow construction paper cut strips the length and width of a pen. Cut a simple point tip on one end and blacken it with a felt marker. Each student who write an putstanding assignment has his pen name written on a golden pen which is stapled to his paper before it is mounted. Students rush to the display to see who has won an award and what type of work merited it. The pen name idea is not original, but it contributes much. On the last day the box is unsealed and the students' identities revealed. With pride and some astonishment the teacher discovers who the winners are. The stimulation of the crash unit and the security of being unknown reveal some unexpected flashes of talent.

Mary Bramer   Kimball Junior High School   Elgin, Illinois

Grade: 8-10 Ability: low Practice: a library scavenger hunt

Familiarizing the low ability student with the resources of a school library is often difficult. One technique that helps the student become self-reliant is the scavenger hunt. On separate three-by-five index cards put questions that can be answered with the help of the reference materials in the library. "Who said it?" questions require the use of a Bartlett's or a similar quotation collection. "What is it?" questions steer the students to the unabridged dictionary, as do questions on unusual pronunciations. "What are the opinions on a certain best-seller?" questions acquaint the students with the Book Review digests. "For what years does our library have copies of Time or Harper's?" questions gets the students into the magazine collection. "Who was he?" stimulates use of biographical dictionaries or encyclopedias. The possibilities of questions, one can see, are limited only by the reference tools of the library.

Before distributing the cards, bring each of the reference works they will have to use to class and explain its function. Also give them a handout explaining the various aspects of the library and the reference tools there. Essentially, the handout covers the same thing gone over in class, but anyone who has taught slow students knows that their retention is not great. It can be surprisingly good, however, if they know in advance they will have to use these tools in a few days in the library.

Once the class is acquainted with the materials, each student is given ten or twelve cards, and the class spends several days in the library. Each student works individually, trying to find the answers to the questions on his cards. Arrange the piles of cards so that each student will be forced to use many different reference works. When he thinks he has found all his answers, he brings them to the instructor for checking. If he is indeed done, he may browse in the library until his fellow students complete their scavenger hunt.

The one drawback to this scavenger hunt approach is that it takes time to prepare the questions. To solve this problem have two classes involved in the scavenger hunt at the same time. The first class is taught the tools of the library, then spends several days in the library preparing questions for the other class. In other words, the classes merely switch questions. An additional advantage of this time-saving plan is that the students are involved with the reference works more: they use them first to create questions for members of the other class and they later use them to find answers to the questions the second class has prepared for them. One caution is important here: As soon as a student prepares a question, he must bring it, and the answer to the instructor for approval. Keep careful track of the answer for checking the work of the student who eventually gets that question.

Theodore W. Hipple   Homewood-Flossmoor High School   Flossmoor, Illinois

Grade: 9,10 Ability: low Practice: involving students in worthwhile [illegible]
discussion

As most teachers of low ability classes would agree, a prime concern is involving students in discussion and getting them to address themselves openly to what is going on. To encourage involvement, begin in the first class of the school year by considering what constitutes a good discussion. Try to get the students to agree or disagree with each other about the expected roles of speaker and listerner; try to get them to add to what others have said. Eventually, establish that the participants in a discussion ought to speak clearly and to the point, that they ought to listen respectfully to what the other participants are saying, and that they ought to respect different opinions and questions they regard as stupid.

Once you have established these few principles, move from the abstract to the actual practice situations. This can usually be accomplished on the first day of class in the new year. Use what I call, for want of a better name, a logic problem. Pose a situation, then have the students try to understand the situation by asking any questions that can answer "Yes", "No", or "Irrelevant." Students may also comment -- in an orderly, courteous fashion-- on the questions of their fellow classmates. As they ask these questions try to get them to pay careful heed to the guidelines for effective discussion that had previously been established. After spending several days on the techniques and on the logic problems the instructor has heard every student ask several questions. If there are still reticent students, call on them for questions. By now the instructor has been able to determine their speaking and listening skills and has even learned something of their intellectual ability.

Use several different problems. If a teacher wants more problems or more serious ones, he can find them in a book on logic or in a games book. Two suggestions follow.

Each day a man comes to his hotel apartment in the evening, gets on the elevator, rides up to the tenth floor, leaves the elevator, and walks up to the 21st. floor where his apartment is. In the mornings the man gets on the elevator at the 21st. floor, rides all the way down to the first floor, and leaves for work. Why this strange use of the elevator?

The students then try to answer that question by asking the instructor questions that can be answered with "Yes," or "No", or "Irrelevant". They build on the information that others have acquired and eventually derive the answer that the man is a midget. The elevator is self-service and he can reach only to the tenth floor button. When he is going up, therefore, he must leave the elevator at the tenth floor and walk up the remaining flights to the 21st floor. In the morning, of course, he punches the first floor, or bottom button, and rides all the way down.

The second problem: A man is found dead in a field. He has been shot through the head. Lying around him are fifty-three bicycles. By whom was he shot and why? Answer: The man was a professional gambler who cheated and was shot by his gambling partners because he cheated. These fellow players also threw the deck of illegal cards he used around his body. The cards: A deck of fifty-three Bicycle playing cards.

These are a little off-beat, not to say downright cornball, but they do serve the purposes of bringing about a good discussion. Moreover, their shaggy dog quality gets the year off to a good, humorous start, a real must for classes of low ability students.

Theodore W. Hipple Homewood-Flossmoor High School Flossmoor, Illinois

Grade: 11-12 Ability: any Practice: providing variety in instruction

Varying approaches and materials often produce greater student interest. One approach to sentence patterns is through an understanding of the generative sentence which can be presented in both kernel and transforms by using transparencies. The overhead projector is helpful for class study of vocabulary, spelling or grammar. Materials printed on roles of plastic can be saved for later review. The slow learner often responds well to classic comic books and crossword puzzles taken from Practical English, Literary Cavalcade and the Scholastic Magazine. To keep all students using phenetic skills, provide frequent practice by posting phonetic transcriptions of news, instructions, or announcements.

Mrs. Pearl Seely Moore High School Moore, Oklahoma

Grade: 10,11 Ability: low Practice: recognizing student achievement

Teachers of low ability groups will agree it is a constant struggle to provide encouragement and stimulate a good level of student response. One immediate stimulus to achievement is to seat students according to their grade for that class. Each grading period, they move either forward or backward depending on their academic achievement. The student who is last is told not to worry about the first person, but about the person sitting immediately in front of him. This is the student he should try to surpass. Another old, but effective, technique is publicly praising and posting all outstanding tests, interesting essays, and other praiseworthy efforts.

I. L. Orozco   L. W. Fox Vocational and Technical School   San Antonio, Texas

Grade: 9,11 Ability: high, average Practice: developing listening and note-taking skills

To improve listening skills and note-taking and to increase the student's knowledge of mythology, try the following procedure:

1. Use chapter 32 in Warriner's English Grammar and Composition or a similar presentation as a basis for discussing why we listen and how we listen. This information is easily adjusted to suit the needs of the different groups.
2. When the textual study is completed, use the listening skill builders in Science Research Associates secondary reading kit at the beginning of each period for six periods.
3. After practicing listening skills study "On the Creation" and James Weldon Johnson's "The Creation" in Adventures in American Literature, John Gehlmann and Mary Rives Bowman, editors, Harcourt, Brace and World.
4. Read to the students and have them take notes on the Greek and Norse versions of the creation.
5. Discuss how to write a comparison. Have the students use the notes they have taken to write a comparison of any two versions. Some groups are capable of comparison of more than two.
6. When students have finished comparisons, continue reading a simple version of myths to the students at the beginning of each class period and have them take notes. This requires five to ten minutes and not only gives students an opportunity to practice listening skills and to take notes but also acquaints them with mythology. Include questions on the myths on tests.

A Valentine Day review of famous couples in mythology may be provided by placing the first names of the man and woman on separate white lace hearts and displaying them together on a red background. Students enjoy identifying the couples.

Ruth Laux   Morrilton High School   Morrilton, Arkansas

Grade: 7, Ability: mixed, Practice: discrimating among dictionary definitions

Students often need practice in discriminating among the variety of definitions a dictionary offers. To them the differences seem so slight, the significance so unimportant. To sharpen discrimination, two experiences seem helpful. One is to select a word like head or draw which has many definitions. Limiting the exercises to one part of speech at a time, construct sentences which illustrate specifically by context several of the definitions. The student then matches sentence and definition.

HEAD, NOUN DEFINITIONS

1. The waves crashed against the head. Def. 13,* a headland or projecting sandbar
2. He was appointed as head of the school. Def. 6, a director or chief
3. The heads in the Chronicle are usually printed in capital letters. Def. 22, the headlines of a (newspaper) article,

*Definitions from Webster's Collegiate Dictionary, Fifth Edition.

The reverse of this exercise is to have the student begin with a particular pair of definitions and write phrases or sentences illustrative of their differences.

Kent Gill, David Junior High School, Davis, California

Grade: 9,10 Ability: high, Practice: traditional grammar; one way to better sentences

Although much disparaged of late, traditional grammar can have some value in teaching bright students a more sophisticated knowledge of sentence structure, enabling them to write sentences of greater complexity. Assuming a class of bright freshmen or sophomores know the parts of speech and parts of sentences, I move into a detailed examination of the uses of verbal phrases and subordinate clauses. Use carefully chosen illustrative sentences and require the writing of sentences with certain specified components. For explanation purposes this unit may be considered in three parts, but teach it as one uninterrupted whole.

A. Verbal phrases. First present the formation of the gerund, the participle, and the infinitive. Next discuss their uses in sentences and their expansion possibilities. E.g.

gerund: form: 1st principal part of a verb plus "ing" use: as a noun, which is to say, as a subject, direct object, object of a preposition, and so on.

examples:

(a) Collecting rocks is fun.
(b) He liked collecting rocks.
(c) He developed his muscles by collecting rocks.

This same sort of operational definition is then used for participles and infinitives. Next ask students to "ABC" some sentences containing verbal phrases.

(a) Identify the verbal phrase.
(b) Tell what kind of verbal phrase it is.
(c) Tell how it is used in the sentence.

example: Arriving early, we tried to get seats near the front.

(a) Arriving early
(b) participial phrase
(c) used to modify "we"

(a) to get seats near the front
(b) infinitive phrase
(c) direct object of "tried"

The next assignment is to have students write original sentences using verbal phrase in a specific fashion. Write a sentence containing a gerund phrase modified by a participial phrase. (Hitting a ball thrown by Jack is not easy.)

B. Subordinate clauses - Follow essentially the same procedure for adjective, adverb, and noun clauses, examining first their makeup and then their use in sentences. Then "ABC" some sentences containing subordinate clauses and write sentences in which they appear. ABC all the subordinate clauses in the following sentence: When we left the gym we knew that we would meet some fellows who were members of the opposing team. Write a sentence containing the following: An introductory adverb clause in which the direct object is a noun clause. Have the direct object of the main clause modified by an adjective clause. (Since we knew that he wasn't very smart, we gave him the easiest test we could find.)

C. Verbal phrases and subordinate clauses combined - This part of the unit follows the same procedure - that of analysing sentences with the ABC method of writing certain sentences, the parts of which have been specified. E.g. ABC all the verbal phrases and subordinate clauses in the following sentence: Hoping to find the algebra book which I had lost, I returned to English class as soon as the bell rang. Then write a sentence: Introduced by an adverb clause which has as its direct object a noun clause. Include in the noun clause a participial phrase. Have an infinitive phrase in the main clause. (When he learned that he had passed the test given by Mrs. Clark, he wanted to shout with joy.)

To all of these specific writing problems can be added the usual assortment of prepositional phrases, indirect objects, appositives, absolute constructions, and so on. This method of employing traditional grammar helps students gain an understanding of sentence structure and enables them to write sentences of greater complexity and variety, with an understanding of what they are doing.

Theodore W. Hipple, Homewood-Flossmoor High School, Flossmoor, Illinois

Grade: 10 , Ability: high, average, Practice: expanding and contracting sentences

The concepts and terminology of transformational grammar can be used, even if in a limited extent, in solving problems of sentence emphasis and idea subordination. Writing sentences can be thought of as both expansion and contraction: expansion of one sentence base by the contraction (T-delete) of other possible, though unwritten, kernels which become subordinated. Give students exercises in which they must reduce a complex sentence to two kernel sentences. For instance:

1). The calendar has dates of importance on it.
Kernels 2). The calendar sits on my desk.

Students learn that relative pronouns can be substituted in cases when the subject is the same in both kernel sentences. Without calling it so, introduce a transformational rule. Use this transform rule also in exercises dealing with dangling modifiers to show that the predicate of a kernel is transformed into a verbal (participle) and the identity of verbal's unwritten subject and the subject of the main clause are assumed to be the same, though this assumption is often faulty. Such practice in what and how to subordinate gradually leads to awareness of larger emphasis within an essay.

William A. Tremblay, Tantasqua Regional High School, Sturbridge,Massachusetts

Grade: 10, Ability: average, mixed, Practice: sentence-expansion techniques

Since many schools use Warriner's English Grammar and Composition series, the following technique may be useful as transition from the grammar to the composition sections of the book. It involves a review of the sentence base and all the types of phrases, clauses, and other types of modifiers. Students are given compound-complex sentences, not for diagramming but to bracket off modifiers indicating phrases and clauses as units of modification. Take this opportunity to reinforce the general syntactic rule that all modifiers should be placed as near as possible to the words they modify.

Then, after providing a sentence base, ask the class to compose sentences by the process of expansion by degrees, from one-word modifiers to phrases to clauses. For instance:

Trees	shed	leaves
subject	predicate	complement, direct object

In the fall, elm trees in our neighborhood shed leaves of many colors.

Elm trees that stand in our neighborhood shed leaves of many colors before the winter season comes each year.

By learning to see modifiers as units, and by experiments in re-arranging these units to see what can and what cannot be shifted without creating the confusion of misplaced modifiers, students are readied to tackle the first chapter of Warriner's hnadbook on composition: Sentence Variety.

The essential goal here is to have students create their own sentences in class. They learn never to lose sight of their sentence base.

William A. Tremblay, Tantasqua Regional High School, Sturbridge, Massachusetts

Grade: 9, Ability: high, average, Practice: original verbals and phrases

In teaching verbals the following prove workable and interesting:

1. Writing autobiographies with participial phrases
   Ex. - 1. Born at midnight in the Jefferson Davis Hospital...
   2. Neighbors, protesting my nightly howls,....

2. Writing infinitive phrases to complete a statement
   Ex. - 1. In this my fourteenth year I desire to persuade my parents to let me date, to read one good book a month, to be kinder to my sister...
   2. In this year of 1966 I resolve to make three lasting friendships, to improve my personal grooming...

3. In sentences using a gerund modified by a vivid adverb
   Ex. - 1. Playing the piano dreamily puts me in a pensive mood.
   2. By swimming vigorously, I seem outdistanced my opponents.

4. Listing all verbals from "The Gettysburg Address" or some other piece of familiar prose.

Practice in using prepositional phrases may be provided by assigning original sentences to be written with prepositional phrases in series, having contrast in each pair of phrases, and having the words following the preposition begin with the same sound. One student wrote:

"This is my America, a land of Burton's "Hamlet" and Beatle movies, of the New York World Fair and Natchez under the Hill, of popcorn and pheasant, of clocks and computers, of supermen and segregationists."

These same devices can be adapted to the teaching of dependent clauses.

Constance S. Gousset, Montbello Junior High School, Natchez, Mississippi

Grade: 7-12, Ability: any, Practice: a functional approach to modification

When teaching the use of modifiers at any grade level, it is helpful to begin with a skeleton sentence on the chalk board and to add to this as many words as the students can suggest concerning how, where, when the action takes place and by what kind of person the action is done. As each new element is added to the sentence more description is called for. For example, if the students suggest a prepositional phrase as a modifier, then the object of the preposition is singled out for further description. In this way function precedes definition and definition is derived from function rather than the reverse.

Cecil Hamers, Tioga High School, Tioga, North Dakota

Grade: 7-9, Ability: average, low, mixed, Practice: isolating grammatical elements

Begin the class exercises by requiring the students to memorize a list of prepositions. Class activity consists of oral or written recitation, with each student trying to top the previous student in number of prepositions named. When memorization is complete, assign a writing exercise which calls for the addition of an object and an adjective, where applicable, to the prepositions to form phrases. After the phrases have been completed and read to the class, the students add a subject and a verb to the phrases in order to form sentences.

With this background the students are ready to analyze other sentences, but their first task with each sentence is to mark out the prepositional phrases before identifying the subject or the verb. This practice continues into the study of objects as students find it easy to remember that direct and indirect objects, as well as the subject and the verb, never appear in the phrases which they have marked out. Likewise, the object of a preposition must always appear in the phrase if it is complete.

The same practice also helps teach objective and nominative cases of pronouns since the students discover that only a certain type of pronoun appears in the phrases and that any other pronoun must have either a similar function, if it has the same form, or must have a different function if its form differs. Hence, subject or predicate pronouns are readily learned because of the discovered need for a different classification for the different function.

Cecil Hamers, Tioga High School, Tioga, North Dakota

Grade: 9-12, Ability: mixed, Practice: overcoming sentence errors

Even the better students are prone to writing sentence fragments, comma splices, and run-together sentences when they first begin expository writing. This tendency can be curbed by the following technique. Define a simple sentence as any word group containing a subject and a verb and not beginning with a subordinating conjunction. Then, require students to memorize the subordinating conjunctions and to be able to identify them immediately in lists of words containing several parts of speech. They learn that a subordinate clause is any work group containing a subject and verb and beginning with a subordinating conjunction. Proficiency in this phase permits the student to avoid punctuating a subordinate clause as if it were a sentence, resulting in a fragment. Next, introduce students to the conjunctive adverbs which must be memorized also. These words may be used transitionally between two sentences or between two independent parts of sentences: Think of each of these parts as a sentence. At this point allow the use of a semicolon only as end punctuation, and transitional conjunctive adverbs are always preceded by end punctuation—either a period or a semicolon. Conjunctive adverbs may also be used parenthetically as a qualifying adverb within a sentence. Determine the transitional or parenthetical use in a well structured sentence by identifying the part of speech of the word following conjunctive adverbs. If they are followed by a noun, a pronoun, or an adjective, they will be transitional.

Examples: I have visited many cities; however, New York is my favorite. (Noun follows)

The soldier did not want to go to Viet Nam. Nevertheless, he went with his company. (Pronoun follows)

English is difficult for some students; consequently many English teachers must proceed slowly. (Adjective follows)

There is another instance of transitional use, occurring when a conjunction adverb is followed by a subordinating conjunction, if the clause introduced by the subordinating conjunction is followed by a "simple sentence" (literally an inverted complex word group). This use is not encouraged, but it is taught because it does occur.

Example: An unexpected visitor delayed her departure; furthermore, because traffic was unusually heavy, she arrived very late. (Subordinating conjunction follows along with "simple sentence.")

When the conjunctive adverb is followed in any manner other than those mentioned, it will in a well structured sentence be parenthetical and will usually be set off with two comas.

Examples: Your job is not easy, but this task, also, is difficult.
or The student studied hard; he was confident, therefore, that he knew the answer.

When a student masters these phases, he will not only avoid the common errors of fragments, comma splices, and run-ons but also write more coherently, because he has learned to use with confidence two transitional devices—subordinating conjunctions and conjunctive adverbs. From this point it is logical to go into the other sentence types, complex, compound, and so on which in actual practice he is already using.

Bert O. Bishop, Rosiclare High School, Unit District #1, Rosiclare Illinois

Grade: 9, Ability: high, Practice: visualizing two basic English sentence patterns

For some students, the following visualizing gives an overview of the relationship of the various parts of speech to each other and to the sentence patterns of English. Begin by discussing the very broadest classes into which all sentences in the English language fall:

I	II class
Trees	grow

(Some trees grow very fast in Hawaii because of our climate.)

I	II	I class
Tom	hit	Susan

(Tom hit Susan in the eye with all his might because he was angry with her.)

Giving numerous examples, explain how basic sentence patterns are the same, but that differences will occur in methods of modification using (a) words (b) phrases (c) clauses. Then explain, using the blackboard, that nouns fall into column I of the first sentence class and into the two I columns of the second class of sentences (where Tom and Susan occur in the example.) Verbs always fall in the column marked with a II, regardless of the sentence class in which they fall. Adjectives fall into any of the columns headed by I, since they modify nouns. Because they modify verbs, adverbs fall into the columns headed by II of each sentence class. Conjunctions are used to compound any word in columns I and II of both classes of sentence. Because they are used to make adverb and adjective phrases, prepositions occur in any column.

The following diagram is satisfactory for showing the syntactical relationship of words in a sentence:

	I	II	
	Trees	Grow	
Some			very fast (how?) in Hawaii (where?) because of our climate (why?)

I	II	I	
Tom	Hit	Susan	
			in theeye (where?) with all his might (how?) because he was angry with her.

Stanley I. Koki, District Office, Honolulu, Hawaii

Grade: 9, Ability: high, average, Practice: recognizing sentence patterns through headlines

Teaching Students to recognize the basic sentence patterns of English can be enlivened by working with newspaper headlines. Instruct the students to bring in newspaper headlines and to indicate the syntactical relationship of the words in the headlines. The same basic sentence patterns which occur in discourse occur in headlines:

subject-verb
subject-verb-object
subject-verb-predicate noun
subject-verb-predicate adjective
expletive-verb-subject (rare)

After a number of these are put on the board with their syntactical relationships indicated, have the students indicate which sentence patterns seem to be most commonly used. This activity is helpful in demonstrating that most newspaper headlines are of the s-v-o type. Students are told that the s-v-o sentence pattern is also the most frequently used in the English language. Have the students select five headlines and convert each into a complete sentence. Then ask them to expand each sentence using different patterns of modification.

Stanley I. Koki, District Office, Honolulu, Hawaii

Grade: 10-12, Ability: average, low, Practice: visualizing sentence patterns

The following technique helps students understand and use structural paradigms to visualize basic sentence patterns. As the first concern is with the basic subject-verb complement pattern, begin with a simple sentence of the following type:

The boy hit the ball.

As a result of their exposure to traditional grammar the students are generally able to identify the subject and verb of the sentence. At times somebody will even point out the direct object. These terms are identified by symbols in the following fashion:

Sub.	V.	D.O.
The boy	hit	the ball

The pattern is left on the board and the words are erased. Lines are placed under the symbols and the following paradigm is formed:

Sub. V. D.O.

____ _____ _____ ____ _______

We then try other possible substitutions. After the students have suggested possibilities, I generally give them a list of words to work with. These are listed in a jumble, and they arrange them to form a sentence. This step appears as follows:

Sub. V. D.O.

____ _____ _____ ____ _______

book the girl
closed the

By examining these words the student is able to see for himself the importance of the word order within the sentence. The student has very little difficulty arranging the words to form the following sentence:

Sub.	V.	D.O.
The girl	closed	the book.

It is now possible to point out the importance of the position of the noun determiner within the sentence. Present the student with the following problem:

N.D. V. D.O.

_____ _______ _____ _____ __________

the window the
broke child

As the student knows that a noun must follow the noun determiner and the subject of a sentence generally comes before the verb and as he knows the subject of the sentence is often a noun, he should be able to surmise that a noun will probably go between the noun determiner and the verb. He then juggles the available words around and comes up with the following sentence:

The child broke the window.

The importance of position within the sentence is thus constantly stressed throughout the exercise. The work becomes slightly more complex when you add modifiers. If the student is led carefully step by step through this process he will be able to solve the following problem:

N.D. Adj. Adv. N.D.

_____ _____ ______ ______ _____ _____ _____.

door the small boy
slowly the large door

Your perceptive student will quickly point out that there are two possibilities for the sentence. This is the point where you inductively stress the importance of modifiers and their effect upon meaning by comparing the difference in meaning which results from the placement of modifiers within the sentence.

Eventually it is possible to go on to more and more complex structures while continually stressing the importance of structure and placement of words within the sentence. I have used problems of the following type with low ability groups.

Function Word   1st person Pronoun   N.D.   Sub.

________ ________ ______ _______ ________, __________

V.   possessive   conjunction   V.

________ ________ ________ __________ __________

Preposition N.D.   masculine pronoun

________ ________ _______ _______, _______ _________

negative   N.D. Object of Preposition

________ ________ ________ ______ _______ _______ _______

accident
closed
the
put

but
room
I
say

and
about
it
he

when
not
did
the

entered
his
the
on

table
book
anything
he

These structural paradigms stress the importance of position within the sentence. The student must concern himself with the pattern of the whole sentence rather than just with the nature of one word. Additionally it must be pointed out that the student suddenly realizes the importance of punctuation. The comma in the first line of the above exercise is probably the most important single clue to the nature of that construction. Punctuation is seen as a vital signal of meaning.

Students not only enjoy working these problems, but also develop an almost instinctive ability to start thinking in terms of phrases and clauses, a benefit often carried over into their own writing. It is valuable to spend a few moments each period working on these problems; eventually students start bringing in original paradigms for class analysis.

Douglas W. Houck, Williamsville Senior High School, Williamsville, New York

Grade: 8, Ability: average, Practice: inductive development of some elements in the verb phrase

An understanding of the significance of English word order can be developed inductively through a study of verb phrases. Begin with the simple present indicative and examine what happens to the verb when the have auxiliary is added (have + participle) and what happens when the be auxiliary is added (be + ing). Lead students to generalize about tense difference, discovering only present and past forms. Examine sample verb phrases to identify the modals (shall, should, will, would, can, could, may, might, must).

Determine the requisite English word order for these elements and ascertain which elements are necessary and which are optional. Then the students are ready to look at such a notation as the following:

$$\text{Auxiliary} \quad \text{tense} + (\text{Modal}) + (\text{have} + \text{part}) + (\text{be} + \text{ing})$$

Finally students are ready to declare that some obligatory change in that formula is necessary in order to get the elements in the right place. They generalize that the various affixes need to be shifted (T_{af}: Af + v v + af), so that tense is attached to the first verbal element, that the ing form is attached to the verb itself. This inductive exercise leads to an understanding of the significance of word order, the relationship of the elements in the auxiliary, and the regular operation of language generation.

Kent Gill, David Junior High School, Davis, California

Grade: 9, Ability: mixed, Practice: a scheme for showing form-class signals

When testing knowledge of structural form classes have the students complete the following diagram before parsing sentences:

A noun changes to show (number)	A verb changes to show (number, voice, tense, mood)	An adjective changes to show (degree)
________________,	________________	________________
usually by adding (-s or -es)	usually by adding (-s, -es, -d, -ed, auxiliaries modals)	usually by adding (- er or - est)
________________	________________	________________
		When long, (more) or (most) are placed before the adjective.

An adverb often ends in (-ly)

____

they usually occur after (active)

____

verbs.

Urge the student to apply this knowledge in identifying form class words in sentences. Students of low ability thus begin to use the reasoning process which other students do automatically. This preliminary diagram helps even low students achieve success in grammar.

Mrs. Jean Olson, Jefferson Junior High School, Minneapolis, Minnesota

Grade: 7, Ability; high, average, mixed, Practice: discovering grammatical meanings

Try to use the discovery method of teaching so that instead of students hearing lectures on a subject, they are actively discovering the relationships for themselves. It may take a little longer, but the students remember the topic a lot longer. For example, when studying the traditionally designated "noun" in grammar,have on the board a large variety of nouns. The students then discuss what these words have in common with each other. Later on they discover for themselves with very little help that nouns are one of two parts of speech that usually take the inflectional ending "s." They notice where nouns are likely to occur in sentences, that there are certain noun signallers like "a," "an," and "the" that must be followed in the sentence by a noun, and that nouns are likely to end in certain letter combinations. This practice not only provides many methods of identification but promotes interest and retention as well.

J. L. Granander, Stillwater Junior High School, Stillwater, Minnesota

Grade: 10-12, Ability: any, Practice: nonsense words as an approach to grammar

Try introducing students to linguistic grammar through the use of nonsense words such as those offered by Paul Roberts in Patterns of English:

> One day a speek orgled into a floom. In the center of the floom was a very gruitious grannyflax. As everyone knows, speeks geeble grannyflaxes, though grannyflaxes never foober speeks. This grannyflax was niffy and rather kloobful....

Then work inductively understanding the parts of speech. Identify nouns, verbs, adjectives, and adverbs, not by definitions, but by their peculiar characteristics. Present such material on an overhead projector rather than having each student have a text book. In this way one has complete control of the material. Move then into randomly selected material, such as found in the literature text or other text books, to study the actual use of the parts of speech.

Isham P. Byrom, Jr., Isaac Litton High School, Nashville, Tennessee

Grade: 9-12, Ability: high, Practice: increasing awareness of form-class indicators

To show students how the position of a word in a sentence often indicates its form-class, have students originate completely nonsensical statements. Put them on the board and ask students to interpret them in the light of their knowledge of typically English sentences. A typical sentence might be "A gobadoga loopersoles comala." Students readily decide that something or someone is doing something in a certain manner. Have students point out the signals that justify this reading, such as the word a (later known as a determiner); the final s on the third word which is characteristic of third person singular, present tense verbs, the placement of comala directly after the verb in a position commonly occupied by English adverbs. Of course, other possibilities arose, such as why loopersoles might not also be an auxiliary and comala the main verb or loopersoles a linking verb followed by the predicate adjective comala. From such discussion students gain a better understanding of what determines the form class of English words.

Leola G. Williams, Threadgill High School, Greenwood, Mississippi

Grade: any, Ability: any, Practice: competitive oral review

When reviewing grammar orally, have students number off by the number of sentences to be considered in a given exercise. The one's analyze the first sentence or give the particular constructions asked for, the two's consider the second sentence and so on. One student supplies the answer, but other students with the same number must accept or challenge his answers. If all answer incorrectly, any other student can gain points by supplying correct answers. A scorekeeper records the running totals for answers, usually allowing 20 points per sentence. To keep review moving and include many students, set an appropriate time limit for answers. The technique encourages careful attention, frequent participation, and supplies a quick index of pupil's grasp of material.

Claudia Rosenbaum, Sylvan Hills Junior High School, North Little Rock, Arkansas

Grade: 11, Ability: any, Practice: programmed grammar review

To provide a coherent, individualized review of grammar, use programmed texts written at various levels of linguistic sophistication Texts such as Harcourt, Brace's English 2200, 2600, and 3200 recognize differing levels of preparation and contain pre-tests which, with previous language grades, provide a readiness index. All students work individually at the most appropriate level, taking self-administered tests as they complete a unit. If this review is undertaken at the beginning of the year, three class periods weekly may be devoted to the work, while two class periods are concurrently used for a study of composition or literature. To provide for differing times in which students complete the programmed review (usually about eight class periods), use a rather flexible literature study such as a short story unit providing considerable free reading.

Donald E. Fish, Tripoli Community School, Tripoli, Iowa

Grade: 10,11, Ability: any, Practice: responding to connotative meanings

This assignment teaches the student the value of the "naming" process in language. It seeks to emphasize the ineffectiveness of general, abstract words in naming as opposed to the exciting emotional response to the specific, concrete, and symbolic identification of objects. Begin by reading a general discussion of connotative and denotative meanings, such as that supplied in Scott Foresman's Guide to Modern English. Demonstrate and encourage the use of Roget's Thesaurus. Then tell each student to collect a list of five manufacturer's names for products in each of the following categories: car makes, lipsticks (girl's responsibility), after-shave lotions (boy's responsibilities), roses, and local and national athletic teams. After completion and discussion of this assignment, make the following assignment: using the categories of an automobile, a house, a tiddly wink team (for humor), an after-shave lotion (to be named by girls) and lipstick (to be named by boys), the student must describe his product and provide it with the most strongly connotative or symbolic name he can think of.

Thomas B. Deku, Trenton High School, Trenton, Michigan

Grade: 10-12, Ability: low, mixed, Practice: student-devised games for vocabulary improvement

Vocabulary and spelling can both be improved by mastery of the roots, prefixes, and suffixes most frequently encountered. Have students make "flash-cards" of common roots, prefixes, and suffixes using a felt marking pen and 3 x 5 cards. These cards can be color-keyed in various ways as prefixes green, roots black, suffixes red, for example. Students are invited to make up their own games and competitious for practice with these cards. On the back of the cards, students indicate the common meanings or usages and as many examples as they can find of words containing the root, prefix, or suffix. Encourage the addition of new roots, prefixes, and suffixes as well as the identification of several layers of meaning elements within many English words.

Charles E. Scharff, Corvallis Senior High School, Corvallis, Oregon

Grade: 10-12, Ability: any, Practice: a bookmark method of vocabulary building

This practice not only increases students' awareness of vocabulary but provides a convenient technique for recording new words. At the beginning of the year instruct the student to keep a separate section in his English notebook for vocabulary. Check this notebook each grading period. The method suggested for adding words is this: The student must acquire 4 x 6 note cards and must use one as a book-mark for anything that he reads, even for another class. When he encounters an unfamiliar word or term, he writes it, together with another word or two of the context, on the note card. He then attempts to determine the meaning of the word from the context, but need not look up the word at that time unless it is essential to comprehension of the passage. Several lines are left between entries on the card. When he finishes reading, when he has filled the card, or when he has a few minutes free, he consults the dictionary and defines the words that he has listed only for the context in which the word was encountered. When cards are filled and words are defined, the card is punched and put in his notebook. A further step, sometimes employed, is to ask the student to put a check-mark by each word that he has employed in writing or conversation since the time that he first encountered it.

Charles E. Scharff, Corvallis Senior High School, Corvallis, Oregon

Grade: 9-12, Ability: any, Practice: a competitive class review

Capitalizing on the students' competitive spirit, this method of vocabulary and spelling review may be adapted to other areas of language study as well. Line the chalk board off as a football field. If there is an uneven number of students, a student may act as official and scorekeeper. If there is an even number of students, the teacher may act in this capacity. The class is divided into two teams, and the teams sit on opposite sides of the room. A captain is appointed or elected, and the captains call the flip of the coin. The winning captain may either choose the name of the football team his team wishes to be, or his team may have the ball first.

The team with the ball starts moving from the fifty yard line. The first student on the team is called on to define a word. If he does it correctly within a previously set timelimit, the team moves ten yards. The next student on the same team is given the next word to define. This continues with the team progressing ten yards for each correct definition until it reaches the goal line. The team scores six points when it reaches the goal line. If the student who made the goal can also spell the word he defined, the team scores two extra points. Anytime a student is unable to define a word, that team loses the ball and the opposing team is given a turn. If this student can define the word, his team gets the ball and moves ten yards; if not, the next student on the first team is called on. If he answers correctly, his team retains the ball and moves ten yards. Anytime a goal is made the ball goes to the other team on the fifty.

Field goals may be kicked from the twenty yard line. This is done by the student's declaring that he will try for a field goal, then spelling the word correctly. If a field goal is kicked, the ball goes over to the other team on the fifty yard line whether or not the kick is successful.

Ruth Laux, Morrilton High School, Morrilton, Arkansas

Grade: 10-12, Ability: any, Practice: a daily vocabulary builder

Here is a method to make students more aware of unfamiliar words they see and hear everyday. Distribute vocabulary sheets on which each student keeps a record of the date, a word, and its definition. Each student is expected to find one word per day. Stress that everyone should try to find unfamiliar words he hears, as well as the ones he sees in print. Thus each student creates his own vocabulary list made up of unfamiliar words he himself has encountered.

Check over the words and definitions every week, and every other week quiz the students on he last 10 words. The quiz is accomplished this way: the students exchange vocabulary lists, they make up simple matching vocal quizzes for each other. By making up quizzes for each other, they subconsciously may be learning a few words from their classmate's list. After the quizzes are taken, they are returned for grading to the person who made up the quiz. At the end of 10 weeks when each student has 50 vocabulary words, students make up quizzes for each other choosing any 10 words from the complete list.

Roy Honeywell, North Syracuse Central High School, North Syracuse, New York

Grade: 11, Ability: any, Practice: continuous vocabulary improvement

Here is an effective and simple method to provide continuous vocabulary improvement. Have students bring to class magazine or newspaper clippings of a sentence or sentences containing new words. Students mount their clippings on 5 x 8' cards below the large, neatly printed new word. On the back of the card they provide pertinent information from a dictionary entry, such as etymology, changes in meaning, and so on. In a conspicuous spot in the room, display five or six cards in a large holder so that the words are within the view of the students at all times. Then divide the class into several groups, whose function is to serve as authorities on a set number of the new words.

The student presenting his new word writes the sentence containing the word on the board, underlines the word, reads the sentence, and asks other students to give the apparent meaning of the word, from the context and word analysis clues. The presenter then asks students to give the part of speech and to prove their classification. To do this the student must use various methods of identifying parts of speech. Then the students make original sentences using the new word correctly. Once a week give all students a stipulated number of minutes to recall from memory each one of the new words and to use them correctly in sentences. Collect the papers and give them to different groups for checking. If an incorrect sentence is marked correct, deduct the grade point for that sentence from the score of each student in that group, for someone in the group should have detected the error. Extra credit may be given for compositions that use new vocabulary effectively. Students indicate their inclusion of new words by underlining them in their papers. If the words are misused or misspelled no credit is deducted but more study is indicated.

Mrs. Addie B. James, Pemberton High School, Marshall, Texas

Grade: 7-9, Ability: any, Practice: teaching synonyms to differentiate commonly confused words

When teaching students to overcome common word errors, it is often effective to teach equivalent, substitute meanings rather than lengthy definitions. This instruction/is done through board work and work sheets before any formal drill in workbook or text books is attempted. For example, teach the students to substitute the word main for the word principal and explain that this applies even to the principal of our school as the main one or head of our school. Substitute one of the words idea, rule or belief for the word principle. To illustrate these substitutions use sentences such as the following:

1. What is the (principle)(principal) crop?
2. It is against my (principles)(principals).

In the first sentence it is clear that only main will substitute, so principal is chosen. In the second main would not complete the sentence meaning and is clearly not the connotation intended, but rules, beliefs, and ideas all work well.

Other examples might include:

Use before this time for already.
Use all prepared for all ready.
Use sandpatch for desert.
Use favor for dessert.
Use stimulate or change for affect.
Use outcome for effect.
Use where for there.
Use his for their. (It works for most plurals by still indicating possession.)
Use some for two.
Use also or an excess for too.
Use toward for to.
Use will take or receive for accept.
Use but for except.

After the above drills students play the game of substitution as they apply the common words in regular exercises and their own writings. In this way, when they have finished, they have learned the meanings from context derived by themselves.

Cecil Hamers, Tioga High School, Tioga, North Dakota

Grade: 7-8, Ability: high, Practice: studying language history and change

After a study of the English language and an introduction to language families, a unit on ways in which vocabulary changes arouses further interest in language. As a first step, the matter of etymology should be discussed, and college desk dictionairies should be examined and compared if possible to discover meanings of abbreviations used and different methods of presenting information. Borrowing from foreign languages is only one method of change; others to be investigated include specialization, generalization, elevation, functional shift, trade names and so on. Assigning a topic to a team of two pupils creates cause for discussion of sources, words and language and thus constitutes a fringe benefit. Books which will prove useful on the subject of vocabulary change are:

Robertson & Cassidy, The Development of Modern English,
  Prentice Hall
Pyles, The Origins and Development of the English
  Language, Harcourt
Baugh, A History of the English Language, Appleton
Sturtevant, Linguistic Change, University of Chicago
Marckwardt, American English, Oxford
Mencken, The American Language, Knopf

Laura Singer, E. O. Smith High School, Storrs, Connecticut

Grade: 7,8, Ability: high, Practice: a phonetic vocabulary test

Checking vocabulary by means of multiple-choice phonetic spellings requires that students understand the definitions, pronunciation, and correct spelling of new words, A sample, compiled from current reading, spelling or vocabulary lists follows. Select the correct meaning from one of the following letters and write its correct spelling in the space at the right.

1. A cat has AIS claws.
2. The BHP visited my aunt in the hospital.
3. An overcoat was DMT in such pleasant weather.

A.pri ven tiv H.min is tar P.per sa nel 1.____________
B.zen a fo bi a I.kan fed ar it S.eks ten sal 2.__________
D.tek na kal M.prog nos ta kat T.su par flu as 3.__________

George H. Snyder, Cabrillo Jr. High School, Ventura, California

Grade: 9,10, Ability:low, Practice: a new source of puns

To obtain a clear understanding and true appreciation of that relatively uncomplicated literary device known as the pun can be a difficult task with low ability students. The pun can be defined. Examples can be read and examined. Students may even be encouraged to write their own puns. But these methods have always met with only partial success, because the full force of the pun as a comic technique and the varied levels of sophistication which the pun can achieve can not be enjoyed or observed when the word-play is removed from context and the oral-aural situation. Hence, the classroom and the literature text are not the most profitable place for the studying of puns by low ability students--or any students for that matter. Television, however, is! And the best television shows for puns are the nationally syndicated cartoon shows--The Bullwinkle Show and Rocky and His Friends, for instance. Just the idea of being told to watch these shows for a few evenings (and to make a list of the puns they hear) captures students' attention and enthusiasm. And once they've become aware of the pun through the medium of their first love--

television--instead of their last--the textbook--their awareness, appreciation, and understanding of this comic device in literature will be greatly increased.

Lawrence J. Ondrejack, Mt. St. Joseph High School, Baltimore, Maryland

Grade: 9-12, Ability: high, average, mixed, Practice: earning an assignment reprieve

Try waiving a written assignment when a student's work demonstrates he can prepare independently. For instance, many students study 20 to 25 words weekly as a spelling and vocabulary assignment. A spot-check of meanings may be based on requiring that eight or ten of the words be defined or used in sentences. If the student misses no more than one word or definition or sentence, he gets an automatic A for the following week's preparatory work, without having to turn it in. The preparation consists of writing each word, its part of speech, a definition which does not use its root, and a sentence that shows the student understands the meaning and proper use of the word. Actually, the student has to work hard on the words even if he does not write them out to hand in. He wants to maintain his A average just for status before his peers or to avoid having to do the writing. He finds getting credit for an assignment he didn't do quite gratifying.

Elizabeth Bolles, Sunnyslope High School, Phoenix, Arizona

Grade: 11,12, Ability: average, Practice: retaining spelling & vocabulary learnings

More often than not, average students take the path of least resistance and "cram" spelling and vocabulary work five minutes before the weekly quiz, only to forget it five minutes later. In order to prevent this type of thing try the following procedure:

I. Prepare the list:
   A. Spelling - For eleventh grade students use a list of 300 spelling demons. For the twelfth grade use a list of six hundred commonly misspelled words provided by the National Office Management Association.
   B. Vocabulary - Any list of words appropriate to the students will do. Give each student three or four of the words to look up in the dictionary. Have him supply pronunciation, definitions, and perhaps an example of the word used in a sentence. These words are then mimeographed as the basic vocabulary list.

II. Weekly Quizzes: Each class is assigned ten new vocabulary words a week. The juniors are assigned twenty-five new spelling words, while the seniors are given fifty new spelling words. The quiz consists of twenty-five dictated spelling words (the ten vocabulary words and fifteen of the spelling words.)

In addition there are ten matching questions on the vocabulary words. Sometimes the students match definitions from the mimeographed sheet. Sometimes use synonyms or antonyms (not from the list), and yet other times use sentences with blank spaces for the words.

III. Carry-over:

A. In order to discourage cramming and encourage real learning, make the vocabulary words accumulative; i.e., use four or five of the words from previous weeks as part of the quiz. After eight or nine weeks, begin a new accumulation.

B. After recording the grades of the quizzes, count the number of times that each word is misspelled. Then return the quizzes so the students can study their mistakes. The words which are most often misspelled are repeated on the following week's quiz. When the class has gone through the entire spelling list, go back to the beginning and go through the same list again, this time using words that were not used before.

Robert E. Kauffman, Warwick High School, Lititz, Pennsylvania

Grade: 9, Ability: low, Practice: pantomiming spelling words and vocabulary

To heighten the meaning of spelling words or new vocabulary have students pantomime the movements attendant upon the recognition of several words, written first on the board, then acted out for identification by the class. For example, the verbs stagger, swagger, and saunter may be studied for spelling and meaning. Then the three words, plus others that have been studied recently are placed on the board and a student, previously selected, acts out the proper motions to suggest the words. Thus, the class can see the verbs presented in their original form - as action; and they can better visualize the action itself. The guessing game has appeal. Use the same technique for other words and other parts of speech: pompous, frightened, arrogant, stealthy, and so on.

F. P. Armstrong, Rochelle Township High School, Rochelle, Illinois

Grade: 10,11, Ability: mixed, Practice: daily vocabulary-building

One means of promoting continuous vocabulary growth is to provide short daily exposure to new words. Place three words on the board each day, and spend five minutes at the beginning of the period on vocabulary study. Vocabulary notebooks may be kept in which students write the derivation, the original meaning, the meaning today, and an original sentence. After twenty words, give a special assignment to use these words in composition. Follow by a test of spelling and vocabulary, usually presenting the words in context. Students seem to like this method andmany try to use the words in everyday assignments as well.

Mrs. Alice H. Albertson, Springfield High School, Springfield, Minnesota

Grade: 7, Ability: average, Practice: taped presentation and testing of spelling

With more careful planning of a spelling lesson, a teacher can be released from the uninteresting and time-consuming repetition generally involved in a skill which requires much practice. This plan was successful with more than one-hundred-fifty seventh graders. Plan on paper the exact presentation of the lesson and then read onto the tape rather than ad lib. Dictate the words in their completeness, then break them into syllables. Spell the words at least twice and instruct the students to write exactly as you dictate. Utilize short poems, paragraphs, or stories which offer additional practice with the words. After students have studied this presentation, use a taped dictation of the words in a new order. Excuse those students who make "A" on the first lesson from spelling the rest of the week. Repeat the program the second day, but "B" is high grade for good work. The third day, use head phones with the tape recorder for those who need additional practice.

Results may be varied and encouraging: handwriting does improve, concentration becomes less tiring, and interruptions will be completely eliminated. There may not be an astounding change in spelling transfer, but attack skills will be put into force semi-audibly. Time for a traditionally prepared lesson can dwindle from twenty minutes to six or seven with evidence of more accomplishment. Hand cramps usually disappear and longer writing assignments will be tackled as routine. Students become conditioned to the skill. Large groups may be taught at one time and teachers may team up to share the duties of preparing the weekly tape.

Pearl Bisbee, Andrews Junior High School, Andrews, Texas

Grade: 10, Ability: average, Practice: phonetic spelling tests

An effective way to teach knowledge of both spelling and pronunciation is to give the students a mimeographed list of words about four days before they are to be tested on them, pronounce the words when the list is passed out, and give them a paper on test day on which the words are spelled phonetically in jumbled order. In order to work the test, the student must be able to pronounce the phonetically spelled word. In order to score well, he must be able to spell the words which he pronounces.

Bruce Cole, Hayti North High School, Hayti, Missouri

Grade: 10-12, Ability: low, Practice: a triple-threat spelling test

A frequent source of frustration familiar to teachers of remedial classes is students' inability to remember the names of their counselors, past or present teachers, or other members of the high school staff. This syndrome can be effectively broken by assigning a special spelling test on the first day of classes. The word list includes the name of the principal, the names of the deans, the name of each individual's counselor, of his homeroom teacher, and of his six other period teachers. These names must be spelled correctly and preceded by the proper title properly punctuated. Give the students a week to collect the names, the proper spellings, and the correct titles. These 11 names are extended by the addition of such school-oriented words as library, auditorium, history, English, mathematics, sophomore, and anything else that might prove useful. Proper capitalization is discussed with both the names and the additional words and is absolutely required on the test. Perfection is not a stipulation in most remedial assignments, but for this test it is. Grade very strictly: Even a missing period after Mr. or an added one after Miss counts as an error. So much careless written work will have to be accepted from remedial students that a counter-balance of one assignment demanding strict attention to detail is almost essential. It may be necessary to give the test twice before the majority of the class passes it, but the practice is most worthwhile. Remedial students learn the names of their counselors and their teachers. They have had a lesson in abbreviation, punctuation of abbreviation, and capitalization. They have learned to spell some necessary words correctly.

Anna Lou Klein, Mission High School, San Francisco, California

Grade: 8,9, Ability: any, Practice: a graphic review of English

To encourage review, require each student to illustrate graphically some learning from the previous semester of English study. Students may clip and mount errors in grammar, usage, and punctuation from newspapers and magazines and write brief explanations of the errors and their corrections. Posters may be made illustrating uses of nouns in sentences, correct usage of certain words or terms, kinds of pronouns, sentence patterns, and so on. The message may take many forms, from cartoons to mobiles. All projects are presented and discussed in class. These projects usually extremely clever, colorful, and attractive, may be displayed in the classroom and around the building, attracting much interest and comment. The greatest value in a project of this kind, which arouses a great deal of interest and favorable comment, is not in the attractive product itself, but in the learnings and the feeling of accomplishment on the part of the student. One project of this kind in a year serves to stimulate interest in review and awaken originality and creativity.

Theodora W. Hallin, Woodland Junior High School, Fayetteville, Arkansas

Grade: 8,9, Ability; average, low, Practice: student-created homework

When teaching anything that requires repeated drill (making subjects and verbs agree, placing commas, identifying fragments, capilatizing, and so on), provide relief from the monotony of textbook exercises with this assignment. For homework, ask students to write five original examples of whatever is being studied. These may be correct or contain errors which need to be corrected. Explain that the assignment is due the next day and that the examples will be studied in class so students should take care with basic elements like spelling.

By class time the next day have two ditto stencils lightly lined in pencil for the students' use. Briefly explain how the stencils print and stress the need for neatness and firm pressure with a ballpoint pen. Explain that the stencils will circulate during the period and that each student should select his best example and write it on the stencil. Remove the tissues and start the stencils at opposite ends of the class. While this is going on, call on students to read aloud or put on the board other sentences from their papers. The class discusses or corrects these. Before the end of the period or as soon as the stencils are completed send the stencils to be run off immediately, one copy for each student. Correcting these sheets becomes the next day's homework.

Besides the obvious appeal of making their own homework assignments, the students seem to enjoy the challenge of correcting one another's work. The next day, correct answers are given in class as papers are checked. Occasionally a student will have written an example which makes no sense or has no correct solution. Such an item does not ruin the purpose of the assignment because recognizing this item also has value. There are other fringe benefits too. This assignment stiumlates a great deal more interest than a textbook exercise and is more exciting than a teacher-made drill sheet. It provides an opportunity to prod the careless student and encourage proofreading habits--"John, don't you know how to spell all right? How do you spell it, class?" A good effort can be casually praised just as easily--"David, your penmanship is excellent." I feel the practice is well worth the slight confusion which ensues during the stencil preparation.

Mary Bramer, Kimball Junior High School, Elgin, Illinois

Grade: 9, Ability: low, mixed, Practice: dramatizing oral usage

In teaching lie, lay, sit and set, ask the better students to make up dialogues centered about actions. Use erasers, pencils, papers, paper clips and other small objects which students can actually pick up. Divide the class into two teams and appoint that one student scorekeeper. The winner is the group that can correctly use the verbs in the dialogues the most times in a variety of tenses. Then require the students to make up their own sentences as they go, trying to see how many different tenses can be used each time the action of the verb is carried out as the sentence is spoken.

Sara C. Moore, Edgewood Junior High School, Hooster, Ohio

Grade: 7,9, Ability: any, Practice: success for diction

As English teachers we can spend hours droning about the necessity of good English usage, and diction. The recording "My Fair Lady" says it all for us. This is a never-fail thought-provoker for all level groups. Explain the theme based on Pygmalion, In playing the record, lift the armature before each song and briefly tell them what is coming. Some of the songs are not played all the way through, just enough to build the sequence. When Eliza Doolittle achieves "the rain in Spain" every student triumphs with her. Many of the students have seen the movie, the play, or the opera but that does not diminish their enjoyment of Eliza's accomplishment: mastery of diction.

Eleanor Buehrig, East Junior High School, Alton, Illinois

Grade: 7,8, Ability: high, Practice: improving usage through discussion

Discussion skills and awareness of spoken usage can both be improved through the use of small discussion groups. Divide the class into small groups, each group composed of either "talkers" exclusively or "non-talkers"exclusively. The class sets standards and goals for discussion; these goals, which are restated periodically, include such items as participation by every member, restraint by anyone contributing too frequently, response to previous comment, mental phrasing before utterance, and elimination of repetition. These groups are used for discussing of literature, history, and social problems. Methods of preparation and of holding discussions vary. Several questions can be assigned in advance either for mental preparation or preparation of notes to be submitted. Anywhere from one to four groups can meet at one time; one group can hold discussion for entire class to hear. Generally, the "non-talkers" make more progress in discussion than the "talkers," who of course, are better at conversation.

Usage is considered here as a matter of increasing an individual's skill in expressing himself. Specific items of sub-standard usage, although few in a group of this type, are

are mentioned if they recur, e. g. "guy", "this man he...;" specific speech patterns are isolated, e.g. "well...well...well," "uh...uh...uh;" words and rephrasing are suggested on the spot if a pupil has difficulty in making his point.

Teacher's list of specific items of sub-standard usage, which is compiled from reviews presented and from discussion sessions, can be referred to after analyzing a story such as Faulkner's "Two Soldiers" in which characters are developed through use of different dialects, among other devices. Pupils should be aware that they are judging characters to some degree by the dialect each speaks; pupils will perhaps apply this awareness to consideration of their own speech.

Laura Singer, E. O. Smith High School, Storrs, Connecticut

Grade: 9, 10, 11, Ability: high, average, Practice: teacher-made texts

Specific remedial help for language weakness can be provided through teacher-made programed texts. As an example students seem to prefer an intensive programed review of misplaced modifiers to oral or written study of the same subject. Vocabulary can be similarly programed, using words from assigned fiction and non-fiction readings. The initial investment in teacher time and effort is more than compensated for by later learning flexibility and student enthusiasm for the materials.

Paul Berry, Punahou School, Honolulu, Hawaii

Grade: 12, Ability: mixed, Practice: analyzing advertising

A study of propaganda devices may begin with consideration of Vance Packard's The Hidden Persuaders and identification of some of the most common appeals of advertising. Have students select three ads for one product (cigarettes, perfume, automobilies, for instance) and describe each one in terms of format, captions, tone, art and specific type of appeal. Students engage in some firsthand research, learn to analyze selling techniques, and become more aware of the needs, desires, and vanities to which advertising appeals.

Florence Brinton, Sentinel High School, Missoula, Montana

Grade: 11-12, Ability: high, average, Practice: exploiting periodicals

Students are often called upon to write essays, but frequently at a loss for subject matter; they have little to say. Requiring students to read magazines regularly provides them with a body of knowledge they can later use in compositions.

Such reading also exposes them to well-written modern prose and a variety of ideas they would not normally encounter.

It is helpful to duplicate an assignment sheet that students use all year. Sample data requested may include the title of article, author, if giving magazine title, date, and page, a short summary, and comments or recommendations. To provide breadth of reading, require that students report from an entire periodical list before repeating a specific magazine. An ordinary school year provides opportunity for four reports from each source. However, if a teacher is working with an accelerated class, two reports might be required each week. The goal of the assignment is the reading and the students' exposure to fresh ideas more than the short weekly report. Other objectives may be added. For example, a bonus might be given if a student reports on the same topic for two or three successive weeks; this allows him to see how the same subject can be handled differently according to the editorial bias of the publication. The reading list may include The Atlantic, Harper's, The National Geographic, New Republic, The Reporter, The Saturday Review, Scientific American, U.S. News and World Report, Vital Speeches. However, if a periodical such as Time or Newsweek is used, an entire segment such as "Education" or "Medicine" should be required reading. These magazine articles also offer excellent subject matter for oral reports, as they provide an opportunity for questions from the class as well as follow-up discussions. Debates can grow from different points of view expressed on the same subject matter.

Barclay M. Wheeler, Pioneer High School, San Jose, California

Grade: 9, Ability: high, Practice: an analysis of editorial techniques

In relating newspaper editorials to the use of persuasive language, pose the following problem to the class:

> If the purpose of the editorial is to persuade or convince, what persuasive techniques can legitimately be used? What techniques should not be used?

The objective is to have students volunteer the following information:

Can be used:

1. facts
2. forceful wording

Shouldn't be used:

1. inaccurate information
2. card-stacking
3. name-calling
4. glittering generalities
5. conclusions based on incomplete facts or information

After each point is discussed and clarified for the students, have them analyze one current editorial for the persuasive methods used.

As a follow-up activity, discuss with the class the different kinds of statements made in discourse which conveys diverse meanings; as a reference text use Loban, Ryan & Squire, Teaching Language and Literature, Harcourt, Brace and World, New York, 1961. The different kinds of statement are:

1. factual
2. judgmental
3. normative
4. metaphorical

Then ask students to analyze a current editorial, underlining all factual statements, enclosing all judgmental statements, in parentheses, and drawing two lines under all normative statements. Each kind of statement is labeled in the margin. When the work is turned in, duplicate one editorial for the class to read. All judgmental statements are copied on the board in one column, and all normative statements are copied in another. Students are then asked to discuss whether or not they agree with the judgmental statements. For each normative statement, they are asked to identify what goal the editorial writer implies the reader should seek to attain. Do they feel that the implied goal is worth attaining?

To culminate this study, assign composition of an original editorial on an issue that is important to the students. In the assignment, they are to demonstrate successful techniques of persuasion.

Stanley I. Koki, District Office, Honolulu, Hawaii

Grade: 10, Ability: low, Practice: exploiting news publications

Exploit areas of known student interest as sources of reading materials. Often local publishers can be induced to provide free newspapers for each student for several weeks. Newsmagazines may also be used. Allow ten minutes at the beginning of the period for browsing. A visual check will indicate several areas of common interest--sports, crime, entertainment, for example. Follow with discussions based on their reading. Often these lead to broader discussions of community problems facing this group. Reading aloud may sometimes be practiced. Copying lead paragraphs from articles of a student's choice may occasionally provide practice in exact copying and penmanship. Summaries of the remainder of the article may be required as well as vocabulary practice without being so labeled. Credit is given for those who discover typographical errors. Geography lessons often develop out of questions raised by students. There is really no limit to what can be taught when students want to know the answers. Formal tests are not given. Short essay questions are sometimes asked, with little attention being placed on misspellings, punctuation errors, sentence construction problems, and the like. Evaluate these mainly on the basis of knowledge of the subject. Why reinforce their failures when they need encouragement for their successes?

Walter G. Hodges, Camelback High School, Phoenix, Arizona

Grade: 10,11, Ability: low, Practice: panel quiz for current events and English

To promote periodical reading and also stimulate review of grammar, spelling or literature, select two teams of five members each for a period of "Class Bowl." Each team is assigned study of a news magazine such as Newsweek or Time. The contest begins by the instructor's asking a current events question based on the assigned reading. A correct answer gives the team five points and a chance to answer a ten-point bonus question on grammar, spelling or literature. Play continues as long as time and interest allow, members of the winning team receive a test grade of 100 and face another team the following week, continuing until they are defeated.

Ignacio L. Orozco, Jr., L. W. Fox Vocational and Technical School, San Antonio, Texas

Grade: 11, Ability: high, average, Practice: wordusage in literature

While students are reading outside class an assigned piece of literature, such as Sinclair Lewis' Babbitt, use a week of class sessions to discuss current literature on word usage. Chapter 12 of Stegner, Sauer, and Hack's Modern Composition is a helpful beginning. Ask the class to note in their assigned reading instances of variety of usage: connotative words, figures of speech, idioms, colloquialisms, cliches, slang, euphemisms, bookish terms, and nonstandard English. Discussion of these variations develops an understanding of Lewis' style and his intentions in the novel. A related composition assignment consists of selecting either an important issue of the 1920's or a social condition Lewis satirized and showing whether it has a counterpart in the 1960's. Evaluation of the study may include a closed book quiz on elements of the novel and an open-book quiz asking for examples and effects of various types of word usage.

Marion Van Haur, John F. Kennedy High School, Bloomington, Minnesota

Grade: 12, Ability: high, average, mixed, Practice: varied uses of the I.P.A.

Introducing students to the International Phonetic Alphabet can stimulate their interest in language and make them more aware of dialect differences. An excellent beginning is to provide a phonetic key and request a phonetic transcription of a dittoed paragraph. Although many students will have difficulty in accomplishing this task, any degree of success is apt incentive for pursuing mastery of this alphabet. The teacher may put his transcription of the passage on the board. In the ensuing discussion,various pronunciation differences within the classroom should be evident. Student transcriptions often reveal varied pronunciations of such words as law and new.

Further work with familar passages, poetry or prose, may be followed by transcriptions of newspaper paragraphs taken at random by the students. Exchanging transcriptions with a classmate provides an additional opportunity for improving this new skill.

Students enjoy translating some undisclosed dialect from a transcription, which has been placed on the blackboard, even before they have memorized the phonetic key. A transcription in the dialect of a Southern belle addressing her beau proves quite effective. The I.P.A. may be utilized effectively to aid historical as well as contemporty understanding of the English language. The student more readily visualizes the pronunciation changes which have occurred in English through being provided a phonetic transcription of some writings in Middle English. The first eighteen lines of Chaucer's Prologue to The Canterbury Tales would serve admirably. In addition, the I.P.A. is a valuable pronunciation tool in subsequent efforts to enrich one's vocabulary.

J. Harper Pike, Keokuk High School, Keokuk, Iowa

Grade: 10 - 12, Ability: high, average, Practice: phonetic transcription of dialogue

To emphasize the difference between written and spoken English, have students reproduce in writing a typical teen-age telephone conversation by spelling all the words phonetically. With some practice it is surprising how well students can write teen talk. Then examine some lines from modern novels depicting youthful dialogue. Many students are able to criticize the writing and even make good suggestions that might have made the dialogue more realistic.

Another extension of this project is to note the influence the spoken language has upon the written language. The growing disappearance of whom is documented by the omission of the final nasalized sound of the word from many oral expressions, such as, "Whoja bring?" for "Whom did you bring?" Also, students are interested that modern novelists, especially the British are using the more phonetic "-t" to represent the traditional past tense "-ed." This phonetic transcription of dialogue is a natural introduction to dialects.

Roy Honeywell, North Syracuse Central High School, North Syracuse, New York

Grade: 10, Ability: low, Practice: surveying local speech habits

One way to give meaning to the term a living language is to develop a dialect questionnaire for use in the local area. The teacher provides background on language surveys and aids in developing questions, e.g., "The time when the sun first appears is ___________." Possible answers may include sun-up, sunrise, daybreak, daylight, dawn. Students answer questionnaires themselves, survey a number of local residents, and share findings in class. Results of such a study, even if brief, include an increased awareness of speech variations among age and culture groups and an interest in forces of language change.

Ignacio L. Orozco, Jr., L. W. Fox Vocational and Technical School, San Antonio, Texas

Grade: 11, Ability: any, Practice: relating language change and literature

An approach that stimulates interest in the colonial period of American literature is to provide historical information on language change, both through lectures and recordings. Present several lectures acquainting students with reasons for and instances of language change. McGraw-Hill's record Our Changing Language provides additional historical facts and examples of the probable sound of the language at different periods, including the colonial. Duplicate copies of the selections on the recording to present a comparison of the changing appearance of English.

Using this concept of constant change in language, read the usual selections by Bradford, Mather, Knight, Byrd, et al., not only for content, but for examples of vocabulary and grammatical changes in the last 300 years.

Noting the readily apparent differences in language and style between contemporaries from the different colonies—Sarah Kemble Knight and William Byrd, for example—leads nicely into a study of dialects. The Macmillan English Series, Book II includes a helpful chapter on regional dialects. Side 2 of the record mentioned provides excellent examples of present-day American dialects, as well as a comparison of British and American English.

Jane West, Stafford High School, Stafford, Arizona

Grade: any, Ability: any, Practice: using cultural differences as motivators for study

An awareness and an acceptance of one's cultural, ethnic, and religious heritage, while not necessarily a technique are thoroughly important for any teacher of any subject. With the extreme mobility of modern society, the teacher very often finds himself working with students whose background is different from his own. As he learns from his students, his students learn from him as he uses his own self-awareness to inform his teaching. English teachers have an extra responsibility to exploit differences within the classroom in dialect and background.

Some of the most successful units in dictionary use, dialect, and tolerance can grow naturally out of student comments about differences in pronunciation and usage. In fact, one of the most effective techniques is to build class sessions or units around student questions of "What is ...?" or "Why is ...?". While such questions may disrupt very formal lesson plans for some instructors, a postponement of immediate plans is often more than justified by the response of students who want to learn about a given subject at a given time.

Mrs. D'Orsay W. Pearson, Jackson Memorial High School, Massillon, Ohio

Grade: 9,10, Ability: low, Practice: relating driver education to English

One study that appeals strongly to teenagers is based on The Driver Training Manual. In addition to supplying individual copies of the manual, state motor vehicle departments can also furnish literature and film sources on a variety of related topics. Begin with films and filmstrips, and work into compositions and reports on the responsibility of teen-age drivers, good and bad driving practices, procedures in the event of an accident, and proper reporting of an accident experienced or witnessed. Boys are particularly helpful in preparing overhead projector plates describing the parts of a car and in pointing out the parts of an engine in the school parking lot. A study of statistics on local traffic problems or reports of responsible teen-age driving can prompt letters to legislators on pertinent issues, such as the minimum age requirement for a driver's license.

Constance S. Gousset, Montebello Junior High School, Natchez, Mississippi

Grade: 9-12, Ability: any, Practice: pupil-selected projects in reading, writing, and speech

The following is a brief description of a class activity designed originally to take advantage of student enthusiasm over the possibility of combining what they want to do in the classroom with what is required. It lasts four weeks with two weeks of prior planning. Its purpose is to have the students work with the utmost enthusiasm in at least two of the three areas of reading, writing, and speech activities. This is the only stipulation at the outset of the project. The announcement of the project captures their enthusiasm. The extent to which the students are allowed to participate in the planning of the project activities and the freedom which they are given in conducting their project keeps their enthusiasm throughout the four week period.

In announcing the project, spend one class period discussing its feasibility, scope, and limitations. By the end of the period decide what it should not encompass, and for a home assignment have students write essays telling of their desires and what they hope to achieve. This composition not only serves as a writing assignment (which, incidentally, is better than normal because they are interested in the subject matter) but also reveals much valuable information as to what each student thinks the project should accomplish.

Most students want to concentrate on reading--either one author, or one subject, or selected favorite works. Eventually, twenty groups of approximately five books a piece may be listed and posted as project possibilities with topics ranging from science fiction to integration and authors ranging from Sophocles to Vance Packard--something to satisfy everyone. Besides reading, some students want to concentrate on writing. These projects may range from one act plays to scrap books on Edgar Allan Poe's Baltimore. Some students may decide to study art, using sources such as John Canaday's Metropolitan Art Museum Seminar Series and viewing filmstrips on art. Some students actually decide to study grammar in relation to their individual problems.

Work in all areas culminates in either writing assignments as simple as book reports on what has been read and speeches or group discussions on creative writing, to activities as formidable as slide lectures on art and reading of original one-act plays, poetry, and short stories.

Before the project actually begins both students and teacher must spend several periods and evenings planning carefully. The students fill in time sheets with tentative schedules of daily activities and then revise these as they progress through the project. It was decided by the class to break up the weekly routine each Wednesday by having: 1) a guest speaker on Shakespeare's Coriolanus, 2) a filmstrip on sentence structure and its relationship to meaning narrated by a student, 3) a slide lecture on art given by a student, 4) readings of two original one act plays.

Once the project is started, use class time for conferences with individuals or groups on problem areas of special interest. These conferences deal with topics running the gamut from problems in playwriting to problems in spelling, sentence construction, and paragraph organization. Class time is also used for the correcting and evaluating of written work which is handed in as it is completed. At the completion of the project students are asked for a final composition in which they evaluate the success or failure of the project and make suggestions for future projects.

The basic idea behind the project "Time to Study What We Want" is adaptable to any level of ability. This description was based on work done by an academic group but it was equally successful with a non-academic low ability group. In any case, the crucial element in adapting the idea to one's own classroom is maintaining the students' initial enthusiasm by equal excitement on the part of the instructor.

Lawrence J. Ondrejack, Mt. St. Joseph High School, Baltimore, Maryland

Grade: 12, Ability: low, average, Practice: recognizing propaganda

This study seeks to alert students to the more common persuasive techniques used by the mass media. Three of the customary devices are card-stacking, bandwagon appeals, and scientific slanting. Ask the class, "Do headlines stack the cards?" Provide a dozen or more recent headlines for analysis: e.g., "France Attacks American Plans," "Russians Eat Black Bread." From the daily newspapers, the student is to find, cut out, and bring to class three illustrations of card-stacking in newspaper headlines. Student is to retain these illustrations for a future project. Define bandwagon appeals. In a paragraph of 10-15 sentences have the student describe a specific instance when he did something, made a particular decision, or thought in a particular way in order to conform to the standards of a particular group. (Was the student afraid not to conform?) Identify writing with a pseudo-scientific slant. By giving their ads a scientific slant, many advertisers exploit a popular tendency to regard science with awe and faith, which can be easily transferred to the product: "Our soap uses heliol," etc.

CLASS OR GROUP PROJECTS

1. Make an exhibit of advertisements. Group them under such headings as: appeal to the longing of beauty, longing to be young again, etc.

2. Make a collection of cartoons that seek to influence the reader for or against certain measures.

3. For one week, keep an account of the rationalizations heard at home or in school.

4. Make a list of 10 ads showing scientific slants. This may be illustrated in lieu of listing.

5. Make poster or bulletin board displays illustrating all of the seven propaganda devices. (A notebook could be substituted here if no bulletin board space is available.).

6. A final test is optional.

Tape two commercials illustrating each of the devices and play one set at the beginning of the unit and one set at the conclusion. As the students listen, they must write down which of the seven devices they think is used in each of the commercials. In some cases several are used, so ask them to list the MOST effectively used one. Allow at least one class period for discussion of the commercials. Borrow from various local and national advertising agencies about one dozen one-minute commercials

(16mm) to show to the class. Then initiate discussion of the filmed commercials. It is a very effective method of recognizing propaganda, both good and bad. In an election year, with all the campaign literature, the ambitious teacher can really make this unit an interesting one.

Al Hallberg, Miami Jackson High School, Miami, Florida

Grade: 11, 12, Ability: low, average, Practice: newspaper study

Before beginning this unit compile a list of out-of-state daily newspapers from which students will select two papers. Arrange independently or through your local English council to receive free 35 copies per day for a two-week class study period. Often local newspapers will also provide suitable films on the workings of a city newspaper and arrange tours of their plant. Students write to the circulation editor of their chosen out-of-state papers requesting a sample copy for class evaluation. They may request morning, evening, or Sunday editions. A brief review of correct business letter form is often in order at this point. After the two-week study of a local paper, each student compares it to one of the out-of-town papers. This unit can be an effective follow-up to a study of propaganda, particularly with low-ability groups. The general objectives for any group include knowledge of a mass medium in terms of services provided, editorial slant, technical requirements, daily operation, and awareness of propaganda devices used in advertising. For many students, the study expands and raises the level of reading.

Specific daily instruction may proceed as follows:

Day 1--Introduce the class to types of content provided by newspapers and news services. Discuss them on a general basis...sports section, cartoon, society, columns, etc.

Day 2--Give the students a short list of some of the newspaper terms to be used in class. Discuss by line, copy, slanting, feature, etc. Then give each student a mimeographed sheet with general information concerning a daily newspaper. This can be obtained through a little research on the teacher's part.

Day 3--Issue the local paper and allow students 15-20 minutes of random reading. Then ask the following questions: What part of the paper do you enjoy most; what part did you look at or read first, second, third, fourth; what purpose do you think the headlines serve; what policy is followed so that the headlines might by a measure of news value; and what do you think the most important news story on page one is?

Day 4--Read and discuss front page, second front, and editorial page. Read any two editorials or syndicated columnist, then write a five line summary of the column or editorial.

Day 5--Editorials: notice if they deal with local, state, national or international problems. Discuss any or several editorials which seem of importance to the class or our country. Discuss radical or conservative editorials. Write a brief reply to one of the editorials or write an editorial on a local problem (expressways, lighting, etc.).

Day 6—Allow time to work on independently chosen activities. Assign a 75-100 word editorial on some current topic of interest; writing it first as the student thinks a radical would, then as the student thinks a conservative would. Show newspaper film if available.

Day 7—Read and discuss some of the editorials which have been written. Independent work.

Day 8—Studying headlines: is it possible for headlines to be slanted? Show film on photoengraving. A discussion may be promoted if some of the boys are taking related shop courses.

Day 9—Headlines: discussion. Have students rewrite some of the headlines. Begin study of sports stories and the three common types of sportswriting.

Day 10—Discuss sports section in general. Note special language that the sports writer uses. Write several sports stories (advance, advance background, etc.) concerning some upcoming school events.

Day 11—Classified section: Analyze the role of advertising; discuss the costs of advertising and publication.

Day 12—Show film on advertising obtained from the local advertising club.

Day 13—Tour plant and offices of local newspaper.

Day 14—Show film "From Trees To Paper" (25' color), courtesy of local advertising club. Have speaker (resource teacher) for 25 minutes talk on stock markets and how they work.

Day 15-17—Begin 3 day evaluation of our-of-state papers. Students present six minute oral evaluations. Give a test if so desired otherwise have the student do a written evaluation of the units work.

Related activities may include these:

1. For four consecutive days keep an account of the number of local, state, national, and international news articles on page one.
2. For four days keep an account of the number of editorials which concern themselves with local, state, or national events.
3. Count the number of column inches for four days for specific areas—food, airlines, liquor, radio, T.V., etc.
4. Write letters to the editor voicing agreement or disagreement with an editorial.
5. Make a clipping collection of editorials for or against an issue (minimum of 10).
6. Collect and mount political cartoons.
7. Collect and mount examples of alliteration from newspaper headlines.
8. Write ads appealing to specific areas—such as graduation announcements, flying via a certain airline, food, etc.

Al Hallberg, Miami Jackson High School, Miami, Florida

Grade: 12, Ability: low, average, Practice: understanding image-formation

This unit attempts to define the American image as expressed in The Ugly American and various news media. The teacher's objectives include developing interest in reading entire books, helping students see the value and power of the printed word in creating public opinion and images, and increasing awareness of our responsibilities as citizens in today's complex and precarious world. It can be profitably introduced to a twelfth grade by first reading Animal Farm and Planet of Apes. Begin by reading The Ugly American to develop a concept of the American image in in Southeast Asia and noting the authors' use of specific details and incidents. At the same time, reading various news publications sharpens awareness of how the American image is created. Speaking and listening skills are developed through discussion evolving a common understanding of the American image and the factors that have thus defined it. Provide time for an evaluation of classmate's opinions; hear oral reports on non-ugly Americans. Students may also prepare for panel discussions on communism vs. democracy.

INITIATING ACTIVITIES

1. Bulletin board on the American image will be partially assembled by the teacher.
2. The class will discuss the American image:
   a. as seen by the American students.
   b. as seen by a foreigner
      (1) Image of American as a socialite
      (2) Image of American as wealthy and rather lazy
   c. as Americans strive to improve this image
      (1) Discussion of Jackie Kennedy's good will tour
      (2) Discussion of the Peace Corps movement
3. The class will discuss how the American image is formed, especially in the minds of foreigners.

DEVELOPMENTAL ACTIVITIES

1. The class will be responsible for finding at least one newspaper or magazine article on the American image as presented to the eyes of foreigners. They are to comment briefly on what viewpoint the particular article shows.
2. The class will write an essay in class on "What Is An American?" Several of the papers will be read to the class and points which are brought out in these papers will be discussed.
3. The class will be given a study guide for The Ugly American containing questions on the book, dividing it into eight reading assignments, an advance assignment which involves keeping a list of all the Americans in the book and listing them as causing ill-will or good-will towards our country.

CULMINATING ACTIVITIES

1. Class members will make reports on non-ugly Americans as a balance to the Americans seen in the book.

2. The class will have a panel discussion on communism vs. democracy bringing in pertinent incidents from The Ugly American.
3. A comparison will be made in class discussion of the American image as viewed before and after reading the book and newspaper and magazine articles.
4. Essay tests will be given on the book.
5. Discussion of the importance of the newspaper in creating public opinion may lead into a unit on the newspaper if so desired.

Al Hallberg, Miami Jackson High School, Miami, Florida

Grade: 11, Ability: mixed, Practice: a study of language dialect

A study of language and dialect in the United States has several objectives: to stiumlate student interest in differences in language, to broaden the concept of dialect to include not only pronunciation but also variants of grammar and vocabulary, and to serve as a springboard to the study of American literature. Begin the unit by giving a definition of language, of group or class dialect, and terms such as substandard, standard, cultivated, colloquialism, localism, slang, jargon. Assign a paper on dialect or special language used in our school or by a special interest group. The teacher may provide background information on inquiries made by linguistic geographers. Begin a dialect map adding new materials as the unit progresses. Note dialect regions, causes for speech variations, and causes for uniformity as compared with European countries. Use an overhead projector to show variant terms in different regions, for example: paper bag - paper sack, poke, poke bag;
frying pan - skillet, spider, fry pan, fryer, creeper.
The overhead projector is also useful for showing typical phonetic transcriptions of selected words used by the linguistic geographer. Acting as anonymous informants, students may also compile a survey of family speech habits, or a community survey of vocabulary and grammar may be drawn up, tabulated, and interperted. Taped speech samples of persons from other areas or from foreign countries may often be collected by students or the teacher and saved from year to year. Newspapers and magazines also provide many samples of dialectal differences. The unit may serve as a springboard to a study of American literature, with the variety of dialects used in short stories or novels such as Huckleberry Finn. Students enjoy spotting a passage as typical of a certain region, author, or group of people.

Mrs. Alice H. Albertson, Springfield High School, Springfield, Minnesota

Grade: 11, 12, Ability: low, Practice: an etymology unit

This study stresses the origin and growth of the English Language through student observation, collection, and discussion of English and American dialect patterns. The importance of work elements—prefixes, roots, and suffixes—is also emphasized. The unit can be taught in a two or four week block depending upon the teacher's proposed goals with a given group. Since most students are not aware of the intricate system of words by which we communicate, the longer time period seems preferable. All information and exercises are kept in a notebook which is handed in at the end of the unit.

Creating interest in a slow class can be a problem but ingenuity on the teacher's part can readily solve that. First of all, take several words common to all and trace on the blackboard the origin of each word. (In a more advanced class, it would be wise to begin while reading the Anglo-Saxon epic Beowulf). For example, begin with the word cute and trace it back to the time when it meant bowlegged. Trace the word torch back to its Anglo-Saxon beginning. Take some current abbreviations like REO (a truck trade name) derived from R. E. Olds, the man who invented the Oldsmobile. Take the word jeep (born during WW II). The army uses the abbreviation G.P. for general purpose vehicle. When pronounced rapidly, the G.P. becomes jeep. If the teacher knows linguistics or a foreign language, there are endless ideas that can be used successfully.

After an opening of this sort, give the students a list of British localisms for which they must write the American equivalent. For example, tram, bonnet, petrol, saloon, pavement, cinema, torch, quene up, etc. From there one might go to slang: corking, bloke, dash it, rummy, bobby, etc. Introduce slang, colloquials, and trites at this point and spend nearly a week just on these along. Next one might continue with the United States and its regional patterns and localisms. For example: give some alternate words for the following: pail, brook, stoop, croaker sack, goobers, tap, snake dart, chesterfield, etc. (It is advisable that the teacher do some research in this area before assigning.) Words, Meaning, and Contexts by S. I. Hayakawa is excellent supplementary reading for the student. As for dialects, McGraw-Hill has a record which is excellent. On it, each section of the United States is represented by a boy/girl reading a prepared article. The class is not told which section is represented but must determine by the accent or dialectic pattern of the reader. Next assign a list of 15-20 words known to have interesting histories. i.e. lynch, fahrenheit, sandwich, candy, etc. Word origins may be treated with histories or separately: i.e., cereal, January, bloomer, Burbank and so on. To conclude the unit give the student a list of Greek and Latin prefixes and their common meanings with each prefix and suffix, he must write in his notebook four examples of words containing the prefix and suffix. A list of Greek and Latin roots may also be given to the student with directions to follow the same procedure. Depending upon the ability of the class give no less than 10 nor more than 20 prefixes, suffixes, and roots. The teacher should take advantage of any writing opportunity which arises during this unit. Have the students rewrite sports articles or front page news articles using only slang, colloquials or trites. Then compare the effectiveness of the two. Consult a textbook for other work along this line.

Al Hallberg, Miami Jackson High School, Miami, Florida

Grade: 9, Ability: high, average, Practice: pupil studies of local businesses and institutions

Begin this project in the fall of the year allowing as much elaboration as the teacher feels time and interest permit. Ask the class members to give careful thought to choosing a local business or institution which they might like to make a special study. Students may work alone, with one friend, or in a group. In the first six weeks students gather material, by planning suitable questions for interviews or visits to the concern. In the next six weeks students give oral reports on the business or institution using drawings, products, charts, or any helps they wish. The class takes notes on these reports. Sometimes, if several students choose the same subject, a panel discussion is given. After the new semester begins a corollary activity may be undertaken if time and response warrant. Choose a community of comparable size and write letters to the junior high school students there, describing your own businesses and institutions. These letters encourage the recipients to send back letters describing the town in which they live.

Sara C. Moore, Edgewood Junior High School, Wooster, Ohio